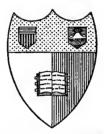
# REMINISCENCES MUSICAL AND OTHER

FANNY REED







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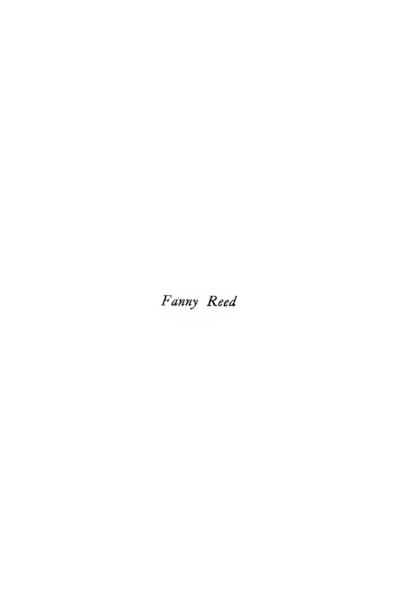


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Farmy Reed



## MUSICAL AND OTHER

FANNY REED

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1903

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#### TO

#### MY AFFECTIONATE NIECE

## MRS. ARTHUR PAGET

London, June, 1902

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTE	R	PAGE
I.	EARLY DAYS	1
II.	LISZT	17
III.	THE MARQUISE DE BLOQUEVILLE	41
IV.	PAUL DESCHANEL	53
v.	Benjamin-Constant	65
VI.	Munkaczy	75
VII.	MADELEINE LEMAIRE	85
VIII.	Coquelin	93
IX.	Massenet	109
X.	Paderewski	129
XI.	BAYREUTH	135
XII.	FINALE	147

## **ILLUSTRATIONS**

THE AUTHOR	٠	•	٠	•	•	1	ro	ntis	piece
Edward VII., King or	r E	NG	LA	ND,	Fe	ci	ig	pag	e 10
Franz Liszt									22
MARQUISE DE BLOQUE	VII	LΕ							42
PAUL DESCHANEL .									56
JJ. Benjamin-Cons	TA:	NT							70
MICHEL MUNKACZY.									78
MADELEINE LEMAIRE	•								86
Design: "Charity"									88
CONSTANT COQUELIN									102
Musical Autograph									110
Jules Massenet .									120
Ignaz Paderewski .									130
IB. FAURE			_						150





## REMINISCENCES MUSICAL AND OTHER

#### CHAPTER I

#### EARLY DAYS

LIFE at the present day is vastly interesting. Perhaps no more so than it was to our predecessors; but it cannot be doubted that we have advantages which were altogether unknown to them. Of these advantages one of the most important, certainly, is the increased facility of intercourse among all civilised nations. But far greater even than this is the freedom of thought and action which has been making its slow yet irresistible way throughout the world.

With the close of the Spanish War, which has left behind it so many important political questions as yet unanswered, and indeed may be said to have opened a new epoch in the country's history, my mind

reverts to my childhood when, during our Civil War, Abraham Lincoln, by a stroke of the pen, freed four millions of slaves.

Just before the year 1861 we were all startled from our peaceful life by rumours of an impending collision between North and South. I remember with great distinctness, one evening, on my father's return from Boston, his relating what he had that day witnessed: the delivery to a Southern owner of the runaway slave Burns. Many of us can remember the thrilling experience of that unfortunate man, who had escaped to Massachusetts, hoping for freedom - an innocent criminal, whose only offence was the colour of his skin. The Fugitive Slave Law was upon our statutebooks; and in obedience to it, this poor creature must be sent back to bondage. No greater proof could be given of the lawabiding character of a people whose sentiments were bitterly opposed to slavery than the giving up of this man to his Southern master; but it was done, and the slave

was taken through the streets of Boston, guarded by soldiers, while the sympathy of the people (with the rarest exceptions) was with this victim of the law. The impression made upon my father was most profound; his denunciation of the political condition of the country, which had brought about this iniquitous act, was fierce; the injustice of it roused his intense indignation and seemed to burn into his very soul. Millions throughout the North felt as he did: and it is not to be wondered at that when the storm, which had so long been gathering, burst in all its fury and the cry of war rang through the land, men were ready and eager to abandon their peaceful lives and to die, if need be, for the sacred cause. It is not too much to say that the heroism and excitement of those days were unparalleled in the history of nations.

At this period I passed the summer in Newport, which was then a quiet, peaceful, quaint old town ruled by the gentry, who

boasted of their eminently respectable ancestors and took much pride in possessing a Court House of colonial date, which to this day remains quite a feature in the city square. Newport had always been frequented by Southern visitors; and although this year they themselves, of course, were absent, the Southern tone was still strong, and Southern sympathisers were very numerous. During the month of August of this year, after one of the early battles of the war, we had news that the wounded soldiers of a Rhode Island regiment were to be brought to Newport. At that time any public care for sick or injured persons was almost unthought of. The query on every side was, how and by whom these gallant defenders of the Union should be provided for. There was only one small hospital in the town, and few, if any, nurses. It was evident that money must at once be raised; and as a first step in doing this, a concert was organised in which residents and visitors were alike interested.

In arranging our music for this concert we decided to have as the finale, Mrs. Julia Ward Howe's well-known Battle Hymn of the Republic. It had just been composed, and was the one poetic inspiration of the war. During our rehearsals with chorus and orchestra preparatory to the concert we were informed that if we sang "that sacrilegious hymn," the concert-room would be vacated, so vigorous an expression of anti-slavery sentiments being a thing that a large number of the audience would not tolerate. The threat, however, did not intimidate any of us.

When the evening came, the hall was filled. It was a fashionable audience, a beautiful Newport audience for that time. Everybody went — Southern sympathisers and all. To me, the youngest of the participants and the possessor of a fresh, powerful voice, had been allotted the solo of the Battle Hymn. The programme was very well received, and when the last number was reached, I stood up to sing with a daring

hitherto quite unknown to myself. Before me in the audience were many very marked personalities — August Belmont of New York, a great political leader; Harry M. Call of Philadelphia, a great social leader; George Bancroft, the historian; Mrs. Kuhn, John Quincy Adams's granddaughter, and her husband; Mrs. Julia Ward Howe herself; and many other men and women of high social and public position, at this moment representing opinions the most diverse, and each positive, convinced, dogmatic, with a violence of personal feeling hardly conceivable at this day. As I began singing, the whole audience rose — whether unconsciously, or led by the action of some conspicuous person, I never knew - and the effect of this intensely patriotic hymn was beyond belief. For my own part I can truly say that never have I sung with deeper feeling of the words I was singing than I did then.

It must have seemed a reproach to every disloyal man and woman in that densely-

packed concert-room. The chorus was taken up with indescribable enthusiasm, and it seemed to me by every person in the audience. Contrary to the prediction, not an individual left the room. Mrs. Howe, who chanced to be in the front row, listened with tears in her eyes. We continued, verse after verse, with an ever-increasing intensity of feeling, until the last—presumably the objectionable one:

"In the beauty of the lilies Christ was born across the sea,

With a glory in his bosom which transfigures you and me;

As he died to make men holy, let us die to make men free,

While God is marching on."

I feel convinced that many a wavering soul was strengthened in loyalty that night, and as the audience dispersed, I noticed that the so-called Southern sympathisers were serious and very silent. The next day provision was made for the wounded soldiers of every comfort that money could procure.

I remember this Battle Hymn on another occasion. On a Fourth of July I sang it at the American Embassy in London. Charles Francis Adams was at that time our Minister at the Court of St. James. It was the year 1864. The war, which we at first believed would be so quickly ended, still raged at home in all its fury. The disastrous days of the Wilderness were just over, and the long siege of Petersburg had been entered upon. Even in some parts of the North, disaffection had begun to invade the cities, and there was talk of an armed resistance to the draft. Again Mrs. Howe's Battle Hymn of the Republic was a splendid incitement to undying confidence and courage.

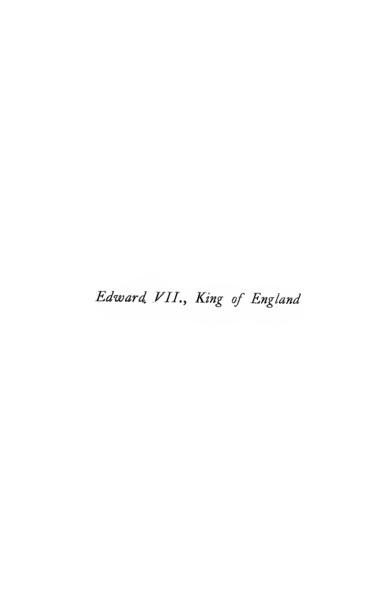
Many years later, long after the war was over, I received while living in Rome a letter from Mr. Bancroft who was then our Minister at Berlin. He reminded me that he had been present at the Newport concert, and referred to the wave of patriotic emotion that had swept over the whole as-

sembly, as they listened to the words of this noble hymn. The direct cause to which I was indebted for this charming letter was a wish to have, as a matter of record, the exact words of the poem which, in the interval, had been lost to him amidst the countless cares of his busy life. He spoke warmly of his pleasure and satisfaction in hearing it sung, and of his vivid recollection of the New England women whose untiring thought and care had been given, in those trying days, to the sick and wounded soldiers of the Union armies.

I could not but wonder that the memory of this occurrence should linger through so many years in Mr. Bancroft's mind, yet there is something about music which gives it a marvellous hold on the memory. On a visit to Cowes some years since, during the race week, the present King of England—at that time Prince of Wales—signified his desire to pass an evening with the friends with whom I was then staying. During the evening he asked for some

music. I readily assented to his request and had great pleasure in singing many songs to a very appreciative listener, selecting romances from my repertoire both in French and English, and I remember particularly one of Sir Arthur Sullivan's which seemed to be a great favourite.

The incident had been almost forgotten by me when, at least eight years after, one day on the terrace at Homburg, I perceived a gentleman approaching to speak to me. and soon discovered that it was the Prince of Wales, who most graciously addressed me, asking if I remembered singing for him one evening at Cowes. Of course I did. At once he not only mentioned the names of all the songs I had sung for him, but alluded with special pleasure to some of those from a book of Nursery Rhymes which had just then been published and had created quite a sensation. Immediately the recollection of these dainty and sparkling Rhymes came back to me: "Sing a song of sixpence," and "Twinkle, twinkle,





# EARLY DAYS

little star," were those which had lived in the memory of this distinguished personage, and the "twinkle" of the "star" could not have surpassed that of the well-known blue eyes of His Royal Highness as he related the circumstance. A truly royal memory has the present Sovereign, Edward VII., a gift possessed in a great degree by the royal family of England, and 'twas kind and gracious to have spoken as he did so pleasantly of the musical evening.

I would like to say a good word for this collection of National Nursery Rhymes, arranged by J. W. Elliott and illustrated by Dalziel. Both music and illustrations are admirably fitted to the well-known Rhymes, which appeal to grown people as well as create lively emotion in every child's heart. The Death and Burial of Cock Robin is a truly pathetic tale. Sweet Maggie's pet bird destroyed by the cat,—the "one little golden feather soft," which she treasures yet,—what could be more

touching? I quote from the Preface a few telling sentences:

"The present volume is intended as a contribution to what may be considered a not unimportant department of our national literature: the Nursery Rhymes, namely, which seem appointed by tacit and universal consent to be said or sung and to be listened to with unwearied interest and appreciation in those great National Institutions, the British Nursery and the Home Schoolroom. Especial pains have been taken to secure the suffrage of that still eager public in petticoats and knickerbockers whom a genial English writer of the last century, who loved children and spoke and wrote of them with infinite tenderness and affection, describes as 'masters in all the learning on the other side of eight years old.' If it be true, as asserted by one of the greatest of English critics and authors, that Sir Roger de Coverley and Mr. Spectator are more real than ninetenths of the heroes of the last century,

#### EARLY DAYS

and that almost the only autobiography to be received entirely without distrust and disbelief is that of 'Robinson Crusoe, mariner, of York,' then surely those important personages, Jack and Jill, Humpty-Dumpty, and My Lady Wind, are real and distinct entities in the mind of every little child whose nursery education has not been entirely and unwarrantably neglected."

# CHAPTER II.

LISZT.

THE same year that the war ended I again went abroad, spending the first winter in Rome, where I had the pleasure of meeting the Abbé Liszt, at that time the greatest living pianist in the world.

The transition from a new country to an older civilisation, full of traditions and artmemories, found a responsive echo in my heart, and I fully appreciated the fact that many new experiences were before me in the study I was pursuing. Higher standards awaited me, finer inspirations, better methods, and greater musical intelligence—all most invaluable to a student in the art of Music. I have never been able to explain quite to my satisfaction why it should have been my privilege to meet as friends

not only so many of the great performers of the day, but also so many of those who stand on the very heights of creative musical genius; and not only these, but many persons of great distinction in other departments of art. One speculates vainly as to the why or wherefore that brings friends or foes across one's path. The mere fact of having a voice or a natural love of music cannot account for it. I think it can be better explained by that bond of sympathy that so often bridges the gulf between the genius and the child, the master and the pupil. is with no sense of personal vanity but only with heart-felt gratitude that I now revert to the valuable friendships that came into my life with these whose lives, as I knew them, I have endeavoured to portray in the following pages, not with a critic's analysis, but with cordial and reverent sympathy. These are some readers who may consider that I have painted my friends in too glowing colours, but to that I can only say, they are my friends as I have seen and known

them. I quote Madame Viardot's touching words in her Souvenirs: "I do not regret growing old, but I do regret that my younger friends have not had the artistic delights that I have enjoyed." (Je ne regrette pas de vieillir. Ce que je regrette, c'est que mes amis plus jeunes que moi n'aient pas eu les joies artistiques que j'ai connues.)

It has not been the happy fortune of many to meet the geniuses of this world in their own familiar haunts. My "stream of chance" seems to have flowed in an unusual course, and, carrying me beyond the prosaic existence of many New England girls, has brought me into the delightful salons of the Old World, whose presiding spirits are beacon-lights in Music, Literature, and Art.

The most brilliant and enchanting epoch of my girlhood was a winter in Rome, and in that delightful and wonderful city came to pass the greatest musical event of my life. Those were still the days when all the world, social as well as religious, flocked to Rome, to witness the great pageants of

the papal court. The old traditions were still in force; life was still a perpetual festa; to a girl's fresh eye, it was nothing less than wonderful to see the papal carriage passing through the Roman streets, and, wherever it came, all equipages drawing up at one side and ladies and men alighting, to kneel on the ground and receive the blessing of the good old Pio Nono.

Within palaces of famous name daily assembled the flower of European culture, and the Fine Arts revived and flourished under the munificent patronage of such hostesses as the Princess Altieri and the Princess Borghese, who flung wide their doors to all the lovers of Art in cosmopolitan Rome.

It was, however, in the salon of an American that I met for the first time the *maestro* Liszt. Mr. William W. Story, in his spacious rooms in the Barberini Palace, had gathered a coterie of musicians and other devotees of Art, in more than one branch of which the distinguished host had made

himself a name. The rooms were filled, and many persons of distinction were present, yet all eyes turned toward one man, that brilliant star among musicians, and at that time the idol of the social world, Franz Liszt.

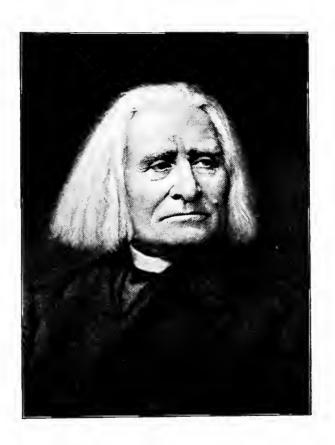
How well I remember his appearance! He was then between fifty and sixty years of age, a tall, erect figure, the always noble presence illuminated by a wonderful smile, and by eyes whose flash was "like that of a dagger in the sun." Suddenly I found myself introduced to this greatest pianist of the day; and a new world of music opened before me. With the greatest cordiality he said to me at once: "All Rome is talking of your voice, mademoiselle!" "All Europe for years has sung your praises," I hastened to reply.

Pleased at the quick rejoinder, he said, laughingly, that he should be charmed to play my accompaniments if I would sing that evening; and, leading the way to the piano, began striking the notes of the prel-

ude to the grand aria from le Prophète. I shall ever remember the great beauty and tenderness of tone that dropped from those long, thin, expressive fingers as they caressed the keys. I was fearless, under his encouraging eyes, and sang as never before. A stage-fright, which should have been experienced then, comes to me now after so many years, and I tremble to think of the girlish amateur, so untutored in the art of singing, standing in happy confidence beside the kingly musician.

And was it not an inspiration to sing under the power of that indescribable charm which had brought all Europe, men and women alike, to the feet of this great master! Yet he played an accompaniment for an inexperienced girl with all simplicity and kindness. As I finished, one little word in sweetest Italian, "Divinamente!" was all that he said. From that moment I felt an admiring love for the generous nature of Liszt which I never afterward lost. This little episode did not pass un-





remarked; and Charlotte Cushman, in her deeply dramatic way, said: "What has that child done that she gets on so well with the Abbé? There he stands with her in a corner telling stories, and the rest of us dare but gaze on the monarch from afar!" "Don't you see that it is the magnetism between music and musicians?" answered a friendly voice. And it is a wonderful tie, this music! The sympathetic emotion is always there, needing but a touch from a kindred hand to waken it to active life.

The next day, bright and early, Liszt came to ask us to his rooms for music: he had invited a choice few to listen to him, among them the ex-Royalties of Naples. There, in his lovely apartment — his manuscripts piled high in the adjoining room — in the Santa Francesca convent, full of the warm Roman winter sunshine and overlooking the dusky arches of the Colosseum, he appeared to best advantage. Liszt must have been always a most de-

lightful host, but when he sat at his piano, his head thrown back, the long white hair brushed from his face and falling to his shoulders, even at his age he seemed to me like a god stepped down from Olympus.

He delighted especially in playing for us the works of Chopin, and who but he could truly understand the ideal creations of the great master whom he had known and loved so well? I believe that no one has approached Liszt's interpretation of the delicacy and sentiment of Chopin's unfathomable genius.

Listen! An exquisite nocturne surrounds us with all that is most delicious and fleeting in nature; one hears the soft splash of the waves on the smooth white beach; a flock of graceful gulls are dipping their white wings in the greenish-blue water, while, close by, a solitary sandpiper skims along the surface of the sea. Again, one pictures "the tremulous flicker of leaves over a bit of sunny ground," the sighing of the wind through balmy pines.

Our reverie is passing. The melody changes. A witching waltz dances in every nook and corner of the room; thrilled through and through by its passionate measures, we long for we know not what — but, chiefly, that the perfect strains should never cease.

On the piano, close at the performer's side lay a cast of Chopin's hand—long, delicate, nervous fingers, such a hand as only the dreamy composer of poetic Études and Nocturnes might possess. This first day, intoxicated with the blissful music, not knowing how to express my youthful enthusiasm, I had almost kissed the pure white symbol of marvellous melody. Liszt divined my impulse, and with one sympathetic glance from him, our friendship was sealed.

Above the piano hung the only picture which adorned the room—a portrait of Chopin. Notwithstanding Liszt's affection for the young master, he had but little sympathy for the latter's friend, Madame Georges Sand. He believed her influence

sinister, and though usually reticent in the expression of opinion as to persons, his dislike would occasionally crop out when Madame Sand's name was mentioned.

When inspired by sympathetic listeners, Liszt would play hour after hour. At such times we dearly loved to watch him, admiring the finely-cut profile that all know so well from his pictures. His face would be fairly radiant with the fire of genius, and his glance was indeed well compared, as I have said, to "the flash of a dagger in the sunlight." I remember being, in after years, greatly struck with the resemblance of Madame Wagner's eyes to her father's—clear, bright, piercing, and full of intelligence.

Liszt's Friday afternoons were to me the happiest of all the Roman days, although our waking hours were constantly filled with an ever-shifting panorama of beautiful sights and sounds. With the lover of classic Rome we wandered among the ruins of Caracalla's Baths and the Colosseum and the Palatine Hill; we lingered in the

various piazzas, under the soft blue sky, where the gay, vivacious crowd made a picture peculiarly piquant in its setting of ancient buildings; we were fascinated by the curiously ugly palaces, whose treasures of mosaic, painting, and sculpture filled us with wonder, and suggested the still more splendid luxury of imperial Rome.

Liszt was profoundly impressed by the grandeur and beauty of the Roman Church; and this man of contradictions, though fond of pleasure, loved the simple life of a recluse; his years of semi-monastic seclusion inspired "the great religious compositions into which he has poured his purest genius." He told me that his first object in seeking a prolonged residence in Rome was that he might explore the musical archives of the Church, to which as Abbé he had access. (It must be remembered that the title of Abbé was simply honorary. He never went beyond the minor orders.) Masses of Liszt do not, however, reflect the dim grey light of the cloister, but rather

the luminous glories of the Cathedral. Saint-Saëns, in his sympathetic analysis of the works of Liszt, writes thus: "The great composer of fantasies is a faultless liturgist. The *Credo* in his mass composed for the Cathedral in Gran, with its magnificent ceremonials, beautiful harmonies, powerful colouring, and dramatic effect, never theatrical, and especially appropriate to and admissible in the devotions of the Church, is sufficient by itself to place the composer in the front rank of great musical poets. Blind is he who does not see it!"

One evening Liszt had consented to play at the palace of the Princess Rospigliosi, his own piano, as usual, being sent before him that he might not be subjected to the annoyance of an unfamiliar instrument. He enchanted us by bringing forth from his manuscript treasures a number of his songs, then little known and seldom sung, though to-day his lyric works are placed among the most brilliant of his compositions. Among the songs he kindly taught me on that oc-

casion were "Mignon," "Lorelei," and Victor Hugo's especially charming: "Comment, disaient-ils." The last of these continues to be my especial delight, as I sing from a precious copy signed by the Master's own hand. Every phrase of his poetic melody suggests the romantic spirit and grace of the French theme:

Comment, disaient-ils,
Avec nos nacelles,
Fuir les alguazils?
——Ramez, disaient-elles.

Comment, disaient-ils,
Oublier querelles,
Misère et périls?
—— Dormez, disaient-elles.

Comment, disaient-ils,
Enchanter les belles,
Sans philtres subtils?
—— Aimez, disaient-elles.

Liszt had an unusual appreciation of the talent of other musicians, and never any petty jealousy. On one occasion a lady criticised Rubinstein's rendering of a sonata

of Beethoven, saying to Liszt: "It was very well, but not like your interpretation, cher maître." He silenced her with a "Chut! chut! madame, Rubinstein is a colossus," implying generously that the latter was head and shoulders above himself.

What a great heart the Master had! When Wagner was poor and friendless, and even obliged to write a transcription of Favorita to keep the wolf from the door, it was Liszt alone who sought him out, and by making known through all Germany the beauties of the New School. saved him from starving in a garret. Liszt was the first to recognise that great master of harmonies, and to raise the young genius on a pedestal where even the worst enemies of Richard Wagner were forced to acknowledge him - "murderer of melody," and "composer of dissonancemusic," though they had called him -- as king of the Music of the Future.

Liszt loved to wield the bâton over the

operas of Wagner. When he conducted the performance of Tannhäuser, of Rienzi, and of the Flying Dutchman, at the grandducal court of Weimar, his own personal fascination and his enthusiasm brought many disciples to the composer. Wagner was lost in delight and astonishment on seeing Liszt conduct a rehearsal of Tannhäuser. "What I had felt in composing the music, he felt in its performance," Wagner said.

The rapturous fervour with which pilgrims now turn their faces towards the glorious mysteries of the *Parsifal* at Bayreuth is sufficient proof that Liszt did not overestimate the possibilities of Wagner's mighty genius. It was Liszt's victory over prejudice at Weimar that prepared the way for the triumphant Festivals at Bayreuth, the most splendid homage to Richard Wagner that could possibly be imagined.

Wagner was the greatest of the composers for whom Liszt won recognition from a reluctant public, and that his devotion was

untiring is shown in the touching correspondence between the two friends. But I have only recently become aware, in reading La Mora's collection of Liszt's Letters, how great his interest was in promoting the recognition of Schumann as a very eminent composer. As early as 1838, he writes to Schumann, suggesting certain forms of composition - "trios, or possibly a quintet or septet," - adding: "Whatever you determine to do, let me know at once, as I should be very glad to have the honour of making it known to the public." Elsewhere he writes of his delight in Schumann's compositions, then almost unknown, and of the difficulties he encountered in placing the young composer's name upon his programmes. He was obliged to force an entrance for him, in the private circles of Milan and Vienna, "where" he writes, "the musicians still had their ears too tightly stopped up to be able to comprehend this charming tasteful Carneval, the various numbers of which are harmoniously com-

bined with such artistic fancy." And in 1857, in a letter to Wasielewski, he says: "I should like to tell you with what sincere, heartfelt, and complete reverence I have followed Schumann's genius during twenty years."

Again, when Liszt saw the people of Leipsic, "in dignified ignorance," pass by the youthful genius, Camille Saint-Saëns—our present great leader of the French school—he entreated a friend to proclaim the young musician "a distinguished artist, virtuoso, and composer."

When prejudice was most wide-spread against his own compositions — even Raff talked of Liszt's "mad enterprises and incapability as a composer" — he calmly writes: "In a few years, I hope, things will go better, more rationally and justly, as regards musical matters. Until then, we go forward on our way calm and undisturbed." In every one of these charming letters to Schumann, Czerny, Brückner, Mason, may be read a lesson of encouragement

to all artists, with or without a name. Everywhere is shown that courage, perseverance, and unfailing good-humour, with an all-pervading devotion to art, which were so apparent to us who met him more or less intimately in daily life. His most trivial letter is hopeful and helpful, radiant with wit and good cheer, as were his words, which I wish that my memory would enable me to repeat.

Some years later, being again in Rome, I went at once to pay my respects to the master. He was still at Santa Francesca, in the sunny rooms I so well remembered. The same immense cat lay comfortably in a large chair. There were the same piles of music, but I think it was at that time that he had had a new piano, a Chickering, presented by the makers, which he much preferred to the Erard of earlier days. As I came in, unannounced, "M. l'Abbé," I said, "I'm afraid you may have forgotten me." With the literally countless number of visitors who flocked to him—even to

see him being a thing coveted by musiclovers — I thought he might easily have lost from his memory an unimportant amateur like myself. He said not a word in reply, but, turning on his heel, rushed to the piano, sat down, and began playing Meyerbeer's famous aria, which I had been accustomed to sing in a former visit to Rome.

The next morning he came to see us at our hotel, and told us that he had asked some people to come to his rooms the following Friday to hear me sing. "I have only asked ten," he said; "is that too many?" The delicacy, almost timidity, with which he put the question was very marked, and characteristic of the refined feeling and consideration which this great man showed towards his friends.

The last time that I saw Liszt was in Paris, in 1886; he was at that time visiting at the house of Munkaczy the painter. A fine picture of him, just finished by this artist, hung in the salon, and as the master, now an old, old man, sat at the piano,

with the same grand air for which in youth he had been celebrated, it was interesting to compare the portrait with the original.

One evening near the close of his stay, I met him at the house of the Princesse d'Eckmühl, Marquise de Bloqueville, whose salon was at that time famous in Paris. Many grandes dames of the Faubourg Saint-Germain were assembled to do homage to the master. When he came into the room, every one rose, as if at the entrance of royalty. Planté, the wellknown pianist, who plays Liszt's compositions better than he could himself at that time, performed several of them most exquisitely. Liszt himself played - but not continuously as he would formerly have done. It happened that I was asked to sing the "Comment, disaient-ils," of which I have already spoken. He listened with close attention, and exclaimed, as I ceased singing: "C'est très-bien, très-bien!" And I could not but answer: "It was thus

that I learned it from the Master!" A few days later he left Paris for Bayreuth and never again returned.

That evening at Munkaczy's was not. however, the last time that I ever saw the Abbé Liszt. Two years later I was at Bayreuth, when Parsifal was given. In the crowded auditorium, before the lights were extinguished, my eye caught the beautiful old white head, so well-known, and the clear, intelligent eyes, still so full of expression. It was a great delight to see him, even at a distance. Later, when the performance was over, I did not seek to reach him, so surrounded was the dear old man by an adoring crowd, but I promised myself to go the next day to Mme. Wagner's to pay him my respects. Alas! that night he was suddenly attacked with pneumonia, and lived but a few hours.

# THE MARQUISE DE BLOQUEVILLE

# MARQUISE DE BLOQUEVILLE

# CHAPTER III.

THE MARQUISE DE BLOQUEVILLE.

I was indebted to the Abbé Liszt for my introduction to Madame de Bloqueville, whose delightful home on the quai Malaquais was for fifty years a place constantly visited by artists and men of letters. Hers was indeed one of the most noted salons in Paris.

The Marquise de Bloqueville, Princesse d'Eckmühl, was the daughter of General Davout, Prince d'Eckmühl, one of Napoleon's favourite marshals, famous in many of the Emperor's most important campaigns. The marquise, a thorough patrician, born in the noblest surroundings, was endowed with great beauty and numberless gifts. Her unfortunate married life brought her little, if any, happiness, and having a noble

passion for letters and high culture, she devoted her time largely to literature. These tastes created for her a companionship with authors and académiciens, who cordially acknowledged her great superiority, and were wont to say that a halfhour passed in the society of the marguise was something to be highly valued. To her very latest day the charm of her conversation, combined with a great heart and thoroughly genuine nature, attracted to her the fine fleur of the intellectual world of Paris, for in these days, when conversation is almost a lost art, this accomplishment is indeed precious. Madame de Bloqueville's Monday evenings were frequented by poets, clever men, wits, musicians, and académiciens who had specialty but that of being agreeable. Some came to amuse, others to be amused. If the rising poet of the hour had a new theme, it was first to be laid at the feet of la belle marquise, - if Diemer had a new composition for the piano it must first see





# MARQUISE DE BLOQUEVILLE

light in her presence, and be played to her. M. Charles Widor, now professor at the Conservatoire, whose distinguished compositions both for organ and orchestra are widely famous, made his *début* and first success in this sympathetic salon.

Among the friends and habitués of the house was at one time Monsieur Caro, a great literary and social lion of the day, whose lectures at the Collège de France were assiduously frequented by the fair sex. This distinguished man had the misfortune to be chosen as a type for a play written by Pailleron, entitled Le monde où l'on s'ennuie. The marquise was understood to be the original of the duchesse de Réville, at whose house the scene is laid; but hers is the beau rôle of the piece. The duchess is an ideal old lady, brilliant, highbred, sweet; but M. Caro as "the Professor" was so ridiculed that he never recovered from the attack, and died shortly after. This amusing comedy was written for the Théâtre-Français, where it was

acted to perfection. Nowwhere else in the world could a play be given with the finesse and distinction that characterise the work of this celebrated theatre. The success of the piece was immense; night after night the theatre was packed — some went to see a clever play representing French social life and a well-known salon; others - and they were many—to see a vain académicien burlesqued. It was a cruel blow for one of the Immortels to be roughly handled. and it seems hardly just, for the fauteuils of this institution are not filled by men of mediocre ability. How the Académie française is esteemed abroad may be appreciated in reading Matthew Arnold's words in regard to this "literary tribunal," as he calls it, which was the fulfilment of Richelieu's long-cherished dream establishing a "high court of letters" in France. How it is regarded at home a French writer may tell us: "L'Académie française is the élite of an élite. No corporate body has ever been a mark for

# MARQUISE DE BLOQUEVILLE

more reproach, more criticism. None has ever triumphed over all this with more ease and dignity. It fills its own vacancies, as is well known. Its selections are made in a spirit hard to define, yet unvarying. Literary merit guides but does not dominate it. Tact, professional integrity, services rendered to the country, the prestige of rank nobly maintained, loftiness of views, wide general knowledge, the authority of character, are taken into the account in an election to the Academy. The illustrious company, moreover, offers no compensation to its members. Hence, perhaps, its power and its indestructibility."

Madame de Bloqueville was a legitimist and a good Catholic with very strong convictions, but she had the broadmindedness to allow all topics to be freely discussed in her presence. This considerate maîtresse de maison always had some pleasant surprise in store for us at her weekly dinners, which were renowned for brilliant conversation. We were frequently under the

charm of one or another author. I remember with special interest choice bits which Mlle. de l'Herpin (Lucien Perrey) — the author of those fine romances, La Princesse de Ligne, Histoire d'une grande dame du XVIII siècle, Roman du grand roi related to us from the results of her research for historical material. I believe there have rarely been more enjoyable evenings than those spent in Madame de Bloqueville's salon. It was often my privilege to sing, at her request, the "Maid of Athens," one of her favourite songs, set to music by Gounod. One evening the comtesse d'H., a friend of the marquise, who chanced to be present, declared with great authority that "Lord Byron never wrote that poem." The statement was at once questioned, of course: a lady near me with great naïveté suggested that the comtesse ought to know as she had written a memoir of Lord Byron. I believe that this lady thought Madame d'H. was correct in her extraordinary statement! The discus-

# MARQUISE DE BLOQUEVILLE

sion quickly ended, as no one sought to convince the comtesse of her error, the origin of which forever remained unknown to us; but it did not interfere with our appreciation of Gounod's fine musical setting which adds so greatly to the charm of the poem.

Besides her sympathetic appreciation of others' literary work, Madame de Bloqueville was herself an author. The Villa Jasmin, Perdita, and Rome, are wellknown among her earlier books, but her literary production of most value is the memoir of her illustrious father, Louis Davout, Mareschal de France. This memoir, to which she devoted many years of her life, was published in 1889. The hero of Auerstadt was fairly idolised by his daughter, and his character and home life as described by her are full of affection and charm. Her portraiture of him dissipates the impression which has existed of Dayout's cruelty and severity; or at least it proves clearly that in his home he was loving and beloved to an unusual degree.

The marguise describes the battle of Echmühl, for which her father was given the title of Prince, in honour of the fiercest cavalry charge on record. Lord Rosebery, in his recent book on the last days of Napoleon, mentions that at St. Helena the Emperor recurred with constant pride to the strategy of Eckmühl, that superb manœuvre. finest I ever executed." where, with fifty thousand men, he defeated a hundred and twenty thousand. "In the year 1806," says Madame de Bloqueville, "Napoleon, wishing to recompense Davout for his bravery at the battle of Auerstadt, ordered that, with the brave Third Corps, he should enter Berlin first."

Living during the summer months on the coast of Normandy, the marquise had her sympathies intensely aroused for the unfortunate situation of the sailors. Shipwrecks in the vicinity were of frequent occurrence, and the coast was insufficiently lighted; accordingly, she made provision in her will of three hundred thousand

# MARQUISE DE BLOQUEVILLE

francs to erect a lighthouse at its most dangerous unprotected point. Her charities were many, and her loyalty to her friends will live forever in the hearts of those who frequented her house. To enjoy her friendship was a great honour and happiness, and only those who knew her well knew how truly noble she was. Even Pailleron's keen and malicious shafts of ridicule, falling all about her, were never directed against herself.

As became the daughter of a Marshal of the Empire, she was ignorant of fear. When Prussian shells were bursting around her, she remained tranquil. During the last convulsions of the Commune it was made known to her that a group of insurgents were seeking entrance to her house. Hastily she attired herself in full dress to receive them, and ordered the doors of her grand salon to be opened wide. The communards came in tumultuously, but as she stood there, gracious and undismayed, and bade them welcome, their mood changed;

they bowed low before her, and retired, ashamed at the evil thing they had proposed to do. They had come to pour petroleum about the house, and were intending to prepare adjoining houses in the same way for the flames. But one woman's courage and gentleness saved the whole neighbourhood.

About five years since, the Marquise de Bloqueville passed away, having been for years an invalid and a great sufferer,—a refined and beautiful soul, for half a century a social power in Paris, simple and noble, a true gentlewoman and a femme lettrée of real distinction. I bow in admiration before une des plus grandes dames de France, the distinguished daughter of an illustrious man.

## CHAPTER IV.

#### PAUL DESCHANEL.

One of the most prominent and important men in political life at the present moment in France is Paul Deschanel, now President of the Chamber of Deputies. Somewhere about the year 1884 I began to meet very frequently in society a young gentleman whose name at first was unknown to me, but who surprised me by the charm of his conversation. I soon discovered that he was very skilled in the subtle art of pleasing, and also that he had great intelligence, strong convictions, and an endless store of information about all subjects of which he spoke. I remember saying to a friend that that young man had a brilliant future before him. It was noticeable that he was an immense favour-

ite in society, ever ready and willing, with his extreme versatility of talent, to act in a comedy or a charade, to recite a poem — which he did most gracefully — or to give his aid in whatever plan was on foot for an evening's entertainment. M. Deschanel well deserves being called (as he often is) un homme seduisant, for he is brilliant, amusing, full of wit, very responsive in conversation, yet quite as ready to talk with the dullest of people, and to do this, too, to all appearance, with as much interest as if they had been great intellectual stars.

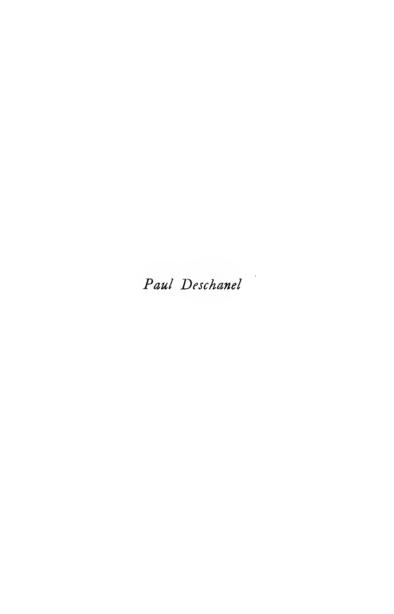
At the age of twenty-nine M. Deschanel was elected deputy from the Department of Eure-et-Loir, being supported by Gambetta and the republican press. At that time his whole appearance was (as it still is) very youthful. One evening in January of the year 1886, I was expecting some friends at dinner, M. Deschanel among the number. In the time that had elapsed between the invitation and the day

for the dinner, he had become quite a hero, as he had delivered, in the Chamber of Deputies, his maiden speech, considered by one and all exceptionally fine, and winning golden opinions on every hand. One can imagine his arrival that evening at dinner, how he was greeted, and the homage paid him, for a success like that can hardly fail of having its echo in the social world. The subject of M. Deschanel's maiden speech was a defence of the cause of French Agriculture, a rather dull topic, one would say, but his eloquence and finished oratory made the grain redolent with romance, and rve and barley as fragrant as "the sweet daffodils." He achieved on that day not only a conquest in the Chamber, but also made a decided advance in his career as un homme politique.

M. Deschanel speaks in public exceeding well. He makes an impression of great sincerity in all that he says, and seems to have a love for France, higher and greater than all party feeling. One may truly say

of him: "patriot avant tout: je ne connais pas de plus beau titre!"

M. Deschanel's ideas, whether conservative or radical, flash like sparks, when talking. He is firm, courageous, determined, and defends with ardour every position that he assumes. On the other hand, I remember his wonderful tact on occasion of a déjeuner with friends at a moment of great public excitement; he was persistently silent while opinions were advanced on the subject which was then passionately stirring the whole of France and indeed the whole civilised world. Efforts to force an expression of opinion on his part were met by a pleasant smile, or a "vraiment, madame, vous pensez cela?" which at once stopped further argument. There could be no doubt he was quite as well informed on this much vexed question, and had given it as much serious consideration, as those who injudiciously brought it up. At such moments tact is a fine art and a most invaluable quality to possess.





In his second year as deputy he again spoke in behalf of the protection of French agriculture: and in his third year, 1888, he made a very remarkable success by an eloquent defence of French interests in the East. Thousands of copies of this speech were circulated in European Turkey, in Syria, and in Palestine, and the Sultan sent, by his ambassador at Paris, the insignia of the grand cross of the Medjidie, and grand officer of the Osmanié to the young deputy.

In December 1891 he was entrusted by the French government with an official mission to the United States, and I had the pleasure of giving him, at his request, letters of introduction to some of my friends. He was most enthusiastic at the thought of this journey, and the visit to a sister Republic. He fairly bristled with trades-unions, labour and capital, political economy, John Stuart Mill, socialism, and the like. This interest was very pleasant to see, in these days of general apathy as to public affairs

on the part of the young men one meets in society.

After eleven years in the Chamber he was elected its Vice-President, and in 1899 its President. In this high office he has served with very great distinction, being, as has been said, "in the very highest sense of the word the 'professional' presiding officer, the strictly impartial arbiter." On the death of President Faure, M. Deschanel's name was mentioned at the same time with M. Loubet's as a possible candidate for the presidency of the Republic; but his candidacy was not deemed expedient at that time.

In 1899 he was elected member of the Académie française, the one great honour coveted by every Frenchman. This placed him in the front rank as a man of letters as well as a statesman. As early as 1888, the Academy had "crowned" one of his works: Orateurs et hommes d'Etat, a remarkable series of studies on Frederic II. and Bismarck, Fox and Pitt, Lord Grey,

Talleyrand, Berryer and Gladstone, in the form of reviews of volumes on these different statesmen which at that time had lately been published in France. The preface to this work gives a charming insight into the mind and character of this young man, himself already, at the age of thirtytwo, a statesman and an orator. are not," he says, "biographies, but are discussions of certain points of history, upon which recent works have thrown light and re-opened controversy. Nor are they studies of pure curiosity: we have a more direct and pressing interest in these questions than one of historic exactitude: it is of infinite concern to us, in respect to our own public affairs, to judge correctly, for instance, of our first conflicts with Prussia, our last struggles with England, the formation of contemporary Europe, the vicissitudes of parliamentary government, the progress of democracy among our neighbours. - In speaking impartially of some of the great adversaries of our country, there

may be risk of wounding certain worthy sentiments. — Doubtless the truth is hard to hear, sometimes, and harder still to write, but though it wound our feelings, it increases our experience, and thus promotes our interests; if a kind of patriotism suffers, a higher patriotism tells us that it is for the profit of France. — It is French prejudices, it is our persistent self-deception, it is our ignorance as to other countries and our inaptitude to enter into other men's minds, that have been our ruin."

In 1889 another book by M. Deschanel was honoured by the Academy. This was entitled Figures de femmes, and consisted of exquisite sketches of Mme. du Deffand, Mlle. d'Epinay, Mme. Necker, Mme. de Beaumont, and Mme. Récamier. A third work, entitled Figures littéraires, completed the trio of his purely literary books, to which may be added many articles, critical and historic, in the great French reviews. In politics his published works are numerous, chieflyon French interests in the Far

East, and on social questions of great present importance. Hence it was with justice that the Académie française called him to fill the vacant chair of Edouard Hervé.

At M. Deschanel's reception the opening of his speech startled that eminently respectable body of men, being a touching tribute to his mother, phrased in the refined and well-chosen language and delivered with the finished eloquence for which he is distinguished. His speech was received with unqualified approval, and was rapturously applauded; it was a deviation, certainly, from common usage in that sanctuary, but it had a telling effect: after all, it is quite as lofty to praise a good and noble woman, as to eulogise and exaggerate for a whole hour the merits of a possibly dull académicien.

In the year 1901, M. Deschanel married Mlle. Brice, the grand-daughter of Camille Doucet, President of the French Academy, a charming and intelligent woman, who will be a faithful and sympathetic com-

panion in whatever future distinction may await him. Up to this time his march forward has been almost without parallel, as if at the touch of a magic wand. Everything in his case seems to indicate the great leader, and many hopes gather about his future. May every success await him, who, amid the strife of contending factions, works faithfully for his country's good and the well-being of a young Republic!

# BENJAMIN-CONSTANT

# **BENJAMIN-CONSTANT**

# CHAPTER V.

#### BENJAMIN-CONSTANT.

In one of the old quarters of Paris, in the rue Pigalle, is situated a very interesting house of rather quaint style. Entering by a large court and turning to the right, the visitor is ushered into a square, old-fashioned room, hung with handsome old tapestries. Over the chimney hangs a full-length portrait of the mistress of the house, who graciously advances to greet her friends with the ease and manner of a highbred Frenchwoman. Had Mme. Benjamin-Constant stepped out of a frame in the gallery of Versailles, she could not look more picturesque, nor more like a grande dame of the eighteenth century, with her beautiful white hair en pompadour, and her favourite Marie Antoinette fichu. She is

the daughter of M. Arago, who was for many years French ambassador to the Swiss Republic, and her grandfather was the great astronomer, François Arago.

The hospitality of the atelier is soon offered to the visitor, and it has been a great pleasure to find M. Benjamin-Constant there, surrounded by all beautiful things, of which the most beautiful are some of his own pictures. As I write the very sad news of his death is filling with grief the hearts of his many friends and admirers, and telegrams of sympathy are coming from all the countries of Europe to the desolate widow.

This great painter's death in the very prime of life, and at the period of his greatest successes, is indeed a serious loss to France and the world. Born in Paris in 1845, he was very early a student at the Beaux-Arts and in the atelier of Cabanel. His first picture in the Salon, when he was but twenty-four, representing Hamlet and the King, was at once recognised as a work

# **BENJAMIN-CONSTANT**

of genius. His brilliant colouring in Moorish and Oriental subjects gained great applause, but his later work in portraits reached a much higher level. Whenever his name has been mentioned in this last year, every one's thoughts turn at once to the great Victorian picture now owned by King Edward, though it was painted to the order of Sir Wm. Ingram, proprietor of the Illustrated London News, and intended for reproduction as etching, heliogravure, or chromo.

The painter's own story of this picture in Harper's Monthly for May 1901, is besides a most interesting fragment of autobiography, with its vast difficulties, and the courage that overcame them, and the indomitable soul that said: "When a thing must be done, it is done." The conception was one of great originality—"to express, as it were, an entire reign,"—"to express, so to speak, a synthesis of resemblance; a resemblance, moreover, rather moral than physical, almost a historical vision."—"At

length," he says finally, "after protracted studies, full of moments of doubt and hesitation, I beheld emerging from the gloom, little by little, the luminous figure of the sovereign, serene and dignified, gazing into the future, as if oblivious of her surroundings, on the throne of state, victorious, as her name indicates."

I have spoken of the vast difficulties of this achievement. The painter had no sittings, he was unfamiliar with the face and expression of the Queen, all that he had to guide him were photographs and "a small, very exact likeness" he says, - which from the context, one might judge to be enamel. He had been much impressed. on a visit to the House of Lords one day with effects of light and shade, a certain "golden obscurity" suggestive of Rembrandt's interiors: and he has represented the Queen seated there, in the large Gothic oaken chair. A ray of sunlight streams across the figure, the broad blue ribbon of the Garter crosses the breast and around

### BENJAMIN-CONSTANT

her is gracefully draped some fine old soft white lace, while the dainty hand, for which her Majesty has been celebrated, reposes on the arm of the chair. A more majestic and dignified pose could not be imagined.

After the picture had been bought by the Queen and taken to Windsor, the painter was summoned from Paris for an interview with her Majesty. Having directed the placing of the portrait, the artist relates how breathlessly he awaited her coming, and his intense anxiety in respect to the likeness. The door opened and he found himself in the presence of Queen Victoria. She came forward, leaning on the arm of her Indian servant, carrying a cane in her other hand, walking slowly and with evident difficulty - but every inch the Queen, though nearly eighty years of age and very short of stature, less than five feet in height. She approached and looked at the beautiful portrait before her; she was evidently much pleased with it, and

69

her gracious and kindly expressions of appreciation were deeply felt by the artist, and he was also much impressed by her Majesty's perfect French, spoken without the slightest accent. That he should be addressed in his own language was most gratifying to the painter as he was not at all familiar with English.

It was after the exhibition of this picture in Paris, at the Exposition of 1900, that Benjamin-Constant received the highest rank (that of Commandeur) of the Legion of Honour. He was also a member of the Académie des Beaux-Arts. In the picture here given he is represented in the famous traditional dress of the members of the Academy, which is of dark green with palm-leaves in gold embroidery.

Another very distinguished portrait by this artist is that of Pope Leo XIII. painted in the same year with that of Queen Victoria. In this case, however, there was no difficulty about sittings. The Holy Father was perfectly willing to pose, J.-J. Benjamin-Constant



## BENJAMIN-CONSTANT

and made the time pass agreeably for the painter with much delightful conversation. It is a most striking canvas, and in the best style. The Pope's very fine face, with its clear-cut features, reveals at once the prelate and the diplomat, combining great spirituality and great intelligence, all of which M. Benjamin-Constant has succeeded in rendering in this picture. From the extremely white and thin face gleam two luminous, kindly eyes like stars, which seem to look out over the whole Catholic world of which he is the head. The long slender hand seems about to be raised in benediction over all suffering humanity. The work is masterly in execution, and a very faithful portrait of one of the most intelligent and remarkable men of the present time.

Among the portraits by M. Benjamin-Constant which I saw in his atelier I remember with special interest a fine picture of Lord Dufferin in his vice-regal robes; also one of his son, Lord Ava, whose life

was sacrificed in the South African war. This portrait was a gift to Lord Dufferin by the English residents in Paris while he was Ambassador to France.

It is impossible to express one's regret that the brilliant career of this great painter should have been cut short by death. Besides his remarkable ability as an artist, he was a man of very fine intelligence, of ready wit and most amiable traits of character. His descent from the family to which belonged the Benjamin-Constant who was so famous during the First Empire, the friend of madame de Staël and of the brilliant group of philosophic statesmen of that day, doubtless gave him uncommon natural advantages, and his industry and perseverance were immense. It is a pleasure to think that he received, even in his lifetime, the reward of exceptional success.

### CHAPTER VI.

#### MUNKACZY.

MICHEL MUNKACZY, a Hungarian artist, born in 1844, was first known in Paris by his picture, "The Last Days of the Condemned," exhibited at the Salon of 1870. This was the painter's first real success. Previously, he had experienced much poverty and misfortune, first in Pesth, Vienna, and Munich, and lastly in Düsseldorf, but always striving for excellence with dauntless perseverance.

After years of hardship, the sale of this picture to Goupil (from whom it was afterwards purchased by Miss Catherine Wolfe of New York), gave him the means to carry out his most ardent wish and become a resident of Paris, although Paris at that time was hostile ground for a painter

of the Munich School — Fortuny, the Spanish artist, being the fashion there, and absorbing the attention of art-loving Parisians.

In 1878, Munkaczy exhibited at the Exposition the picture of "Milton dictating Paradise Lost to his two daughters," which won for him the medal of honour and a European fame; and finally he succeeded in gaining the approval of all the most difficult Parisian critics. It was now but a short step for him to affluence and content of mind. He married a lady from Luxembourg who possessed a large fortune, and established himself in a beautiful house in the Louis XIII. style, in the avenue de Villiers. His principal studio was a grand room in the top of the house. The fine oaken staircase by which we reached this studio was hung all the way up with old tapestries, and, in fact, the whole house was a very museum of exquisite bric-àbrac, and objets d'art. All visitors were warmly welcomed by the master of the

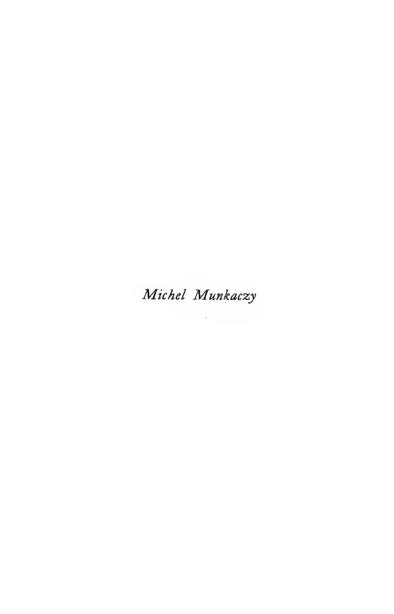
house, and Mme. Munkaczy seconded him in cordiality. There is a portrait of Mme. Munkacsy seated in her husband's studio, which is pretty and picturesque, and has been greatly admired. This lady had the good fortune to make her salon very attractive, receiving the most distinguished men of the day, authors, artists, and musicians; on one occasion I remember that Paderewski contributed to our pleasure by playing for us - it was, I believe, the first time he had played in a private house in Paris. I had a very pleasant conversation with him about Liszt, whom he greatly admired but had never seen, and that evening he played some of Liszt's compositions with great finish and style.

Munkaczy's next important production (in 1880) was a sacred theme, a colossal picture, "Christ before Pilate, in the Praetorium," the finest and most realistic of all his paintings, and one that has most deeply moved the whole world. It is indeed a very impressive picture; the types of the

faces, in their force and variety, as well as the chief figure, are most remarkable.

A later work of Munkaczy's is a painting which represents Mozart in his last hours; this picture was first shown to an invited assembly of friends at the painter's own house. It was ingeniously lighted, as only an artist could have planned; and a concealed orchestra and chorus performed Mozart's Requiem. This composition, as is well known, was the dying song of a grand and noble musician; its character is that of the highest religious solemnity. It occupied Mozart's latest hours and, left incomplete at his death, was finished in accordance with the master's plan by one of his pupils. During the afternoon that preceded Mozart's death, the score of the Requiem, as far as completed, was brought to his bed, and some of the music was sung. It is said that when the Lacrymosa was executed he wept bitterly, and bade them take away the score.

The exhibition of Munkaczy's picture,





accompanied by the music of the celebrated Requiem, so full of deep religious feeling, was intensely interesting — particularly to those present who loved Mozart's compositions, and who knew the sad and disappointed life of this unsurpassed artist, often obliged to give a lesson that he might earn a little money for the day's actual needs. At the moment the covering was withdrawn from the picture, and the exquisite strains of the rarely beautiful choral, performed by perfectly-trained singers from the Conservatoire, with faint notes of the violins broke the absolute silence of the room, the emotion of the audience could be felt — an emotion made up of enthusiasm and sympathy. It seemed to glorify the lovely face on the canvas, and as if we could hear the great composer saying: "I have come to the end, without having reaped the happiness my talent should have brought me," — "and yet, life was beautiful!" Again, as he explained to his pupils how the Requiem should be fin-

ished: "Did I not say that I was writing it for myself?" Haydn pathetically says: "I must always weep when I hear my dear Mozart's name"; and elsewhere, with great authority: "Posterity will wait long for such another to appear."

Munkaczy's picture is now in the Metropolitan Museum of New York. The work has been somewhat criticised, but it seems to me rather unjustly. The difficulties of such a task were extreme; it was, however, a cherished dream of the Hungarian artist, and he gave his whole soul and talent to its fulfilment.

In personal appearance Munkaczy was very handsome, tall and imposing, with a finely shaped head crowned by masses of white hair. He was simple and unpretentious in manner, and in conversation he was dull; in fact, he never talked, being, as near as possible, an absolutely silent man. A few years ago he was attacked by a disease of the brain from which he never recovered, and the handsome Louis-Treize

hôtel, with its rare collection of bibelots, was sold. The artist was removed to Germany, where he died. This hospitable home will long be remembered as one of the few houses in Paris where mediocrity had no place, and you were sure of meeting notabilities from all the countries of Europe.

# MADELEINE LEMAIRE

### MADELEINE LEMAIRE

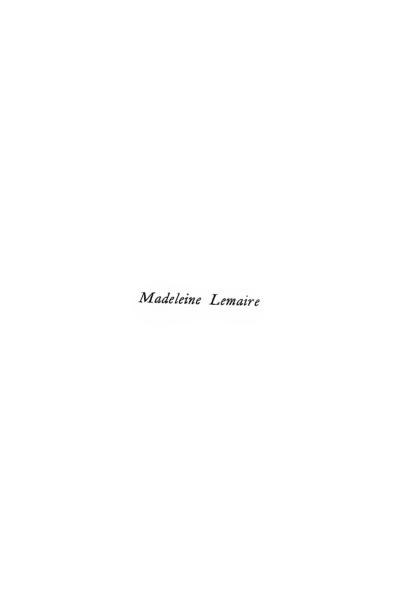
### CHAPTER VII.

#### MADELEINE LEMAIRE.

Who that knows her does not love Madame Madeleine Lemaire, the most gracious and fascinating of women and a most brilliant star in the artistic world of Paris! At a soirée at Princess Scilla's, some years since, my attention was attracted by a very sympathetic and intelligent face; I asked this lady's name, and was told that my inconnue was the famous aquarellist, Madeleine Lemaire.

She kindly invited me to visit her in her pretty studio in the rue Monceau. The room seemed a veritable floral bower. The artist was surrounded by roses (which are her favourite models) in the greatest profusion and the most brilliant colouring. She gave me the warmest of welcomes, and in-

troduced to me her charming daughter. As we talked, my eyes could not but glance about this ideal home, attracted by a multitude of beautiful objects. On the wall, in a prominent position, hangs a lovely portrait of Mlle. Lemaire by Chaplin; there are numerous sketches by Mme. Lemaire herself, and many precious souvenirs from artist friends. This was truly a red-letter day to me, marking as it did the beginning of a delightful friendship. This sweetnatured woman contributes in ways innumerable to the happiness of all who know her. Not infrequently she lends the aid of her talent to the charities of Paris. Her exquisitely painted fans are among the greatest treasures offered for sale at charitybazaars, and her graceful designs, sometimes pencil-drawings, sometimes in sepia or Indiaink, sometimes in colour, representing either figures or flowers, and admirably reproduced, serve to embellish programmes of the evening's entertainment; or else, as in the case of the one given here, draw attention to an





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### MADELEINE LEMAIRE

appeal, poetic or otherwise, for the particular charity in hand.

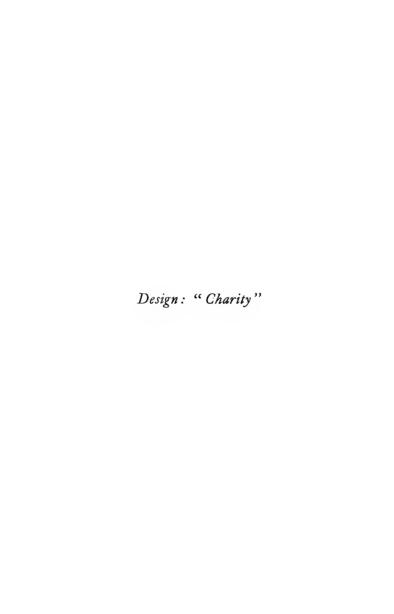
One cannot wonder that "All Paris" seeks an entrée to this unique house, for Mme. Lemaire's salon is essentially eclectic, and has a distinct cachet of its own. Under the influence of the cultivated and intellectual groups who gather there, artistic talent of whatever kind seems to expand, like Mme. Lemaire's own roses, and to possess more brilliancy than elsewhere, for the subtle charm of sympathetic surroundings brings the children of genius to their best.

The little studio is often filled to overflowing with noble and clever guests. Dukes and duchesses, princes, artists, actors, celebrities from all parts of Europe, rejoice in the genial and magnetic atmosphere surrounding our queen of flowers and her pretty daughter.

The most famous French actors are ready to offer their services for Madame Lemaire's pleasure. The recollection of a little comedy given at her house by Coquelin, Réjane,

and Baron brings back the laughter with which we greeted the performance. Ripples of delighted merriment seemed to spread over the audience from every gesture and word of these inimitable artists, and what an audience it was! And of what a rare kind the appreciation — that response meeting genius upon the instant with delighted and complete comprehension of the bon-mot, the jeu d'esprit, the unlooked-for situation!

There was the almost incessant murmur of applause so spontaneous as to be unconscious of its own utterance — that one hears only from a Parisian audience — stimulating the actors to even greater excellence. The play itself was only a clever trifle, but it was written expressly for Mme. Lemaire and never performed elsewhere, which gave it immense distinction. Quite unaware of the exclusiveness which attached to this little gem, I asked Mme. Lemaire, a few days later, if I might take it home to read. She, who, as a rule, granted all favours so graciously, felt obliged to deny this. Mme.





#### MADELEINE LEMAIRE

Lemaire's studio is a little building in the court-yard of her house, and for the performance of this play, she built out a temporary extension of it, so that there was sufficient space for the stage and an excellent auditorium for the guests.

Whether it is a little play, acted by the great artists of the Théâtre-Français in her atelier with its annex thrown out for the occasion, or a *Pavane*, danced by a ballet troupe from the Grand Opéra on a platform in the open air, on the islet in the lake of the Bois de Boulogne at one of Mme. Lemaire's summer fêtes, or whatever she may have arranged for the pleasure of her guests, it is sure to be interesting.

Thoroughly as she is the accomplished hostess, however, and the charming femme du monde, she is none the less the finished and versatile artist. Her talent is by no means confined to flowers, but in figures and portraits she has had great success. A fine portrait of Coquelin as Gringoire has been greatly admired. The accomplished

critic Charles Blanc paid her a very high tribute of praise some years ago: after speaking of her superb colouring in floral representations, he says of her work that it is "le dernier mot de l'aquarelle," which means, I suppose, that it is the consummate perfection of water-colour painting.

Madame Lemaire is at present employed upon a set of illustrations for Owen Meredith's Lucile shortly to be published. Previous illustrations from her pencil which have been greatly admired are those of Hervieu's Flirt, l'Abbé Constantin, and Daudet's Lettres d'un Moulin.

I have given but a brief sketch of this artist, who holds so eminent a position in Paris. We, less gifted, are grateful for the privilege of knowing her, and enjoying the pleasures of her enchanted atelier. The rare personality of Mme. Lemaire seems to be expressly described in the well-known words: "To be charming, gifted, and beloved is most precious, but to be charming, gifted, beloved, and good—is ideal!"

#### CHAPTER VIII.

#### COQUELIN.

It is not without great hesitation that I venture to add a few touches to the portraiture that many able pens have already made of this famous actor, whose name is so widely known in two hemispheres; and yet I feel that to omit all mention of him would leave my reminiscences very incomplete, for it is a joy to recall the many yesterdays of our friendship, dating from long before M. Coquelin left the Théâtre-Français.

Coquelin is so qualified to see quickly into the heart of a difficult play, and so fully endowed with the capacity of representing it as it should be, that he is amply fitted for the career he has chosen.

Every lover of the stage is familiar with

the leading traits of this actor's impersona-His immense versatility is wellknown. While he is par excellence the great comedian of the day, he is also marvellously capable of representing to us heroic and pathetic characters. Tenderness, self-sacrifice, patriotism, are all within his scope, while yet in personal appearance nature would seem to have marked him out expressly for the audacious, the quizzical, the comically impudent. Besides the remarkable mental gifts which make this wide range possible to him it is doubtless also due to the extreme fidelity of his work. It has been noted that many actors, in a given rôle, consider the situations only, completely disregarding the author's conception of the character, so that, whatever the rôle, it is always the actor's own personality that is most in evidence. Not so Coquelin, who makes very careful study of the character, and enters into it to the extent of divesting himself of whatever in his own personality is incongruous with it.

In M. Coquelin's extensive repertory it is difficult to indicate one's favourites. Every rôle that he assumes is played most brilliantly, with a thousand shades of tone, with consummate wit and delicacy. Among comic parts, the valet in Les précieuses ridicules holds a very high place; it is a rôle that suits Coquelin to perfection; that delicious little comedy might have been written expressly to give him full scope for his unequalled talent in this direction. From his first word to his last, Mascarille, is indescribably amusing; the little song of the valet, his pas seul, his dismay as his fine feathers are stripped off by his master, are all ludicrous beyond the power of words to tell. Impudence like this is nothing less than a fine art. "L'audace, l'audace, et encore de l'audace," might be his motto.

On the other hand Gringoire, the titlerôle in Théodore de Banville's drama, is a masterly impersonation of an heroic and pathetic nature. The story turns on the tyranny of Louis XI. Gringoire, in appear-

ance a poor country lout but in soul a hero, is condemned to death by the king for exciting the people with his verses, narrating through the streets the cruelties of the tyrant. Gringoire, by his eloquence, conquers the daughter of the king. Coquelin's rendering of this denunciation of Louis XI. and his tyranny is sublime, and the tirade (to use a French word which is not equivalent to the English "tirade," and expresses more feeling than our "monologue") on the sufferings of humanity is most admirably given, and with so much pathos that, when he finishes his lines, the enthusiasm of the audience rises almost to frenzy. It has been well said by Mr. Henry James that "wherever M. Coquelin has a very long and composite speech to utter, be it verse or prose, there one gets the cream of his talent." Another very distinguished rôle of Coquelin's earlier days was Petruchio, in Delair's adaptation of the "Taming of the Shrew," which under the title of "Mégère apprivoisée," had great success in Paris.

The play was simplified very much from the Shakespearian original. The portrayal of Petruchio represents by no means the traditional idea of that masterful gentleman; but whether the correct Petruchio or not, it was exceedingly brilliant, and both enjoyable and artistic in the highest degree.

Coquelin is the loyal worshipper of Molière, but he has also enthroned Shakespeare among his divinities, and he looks forward to the time when Shakespeare shall become in France what he is to the Englishspeaking world. How often I have heard him say: "That is as Shakespeare would have it." He believes that Shakespeare should be and can be produced in French, and would find a most appreciative public in the French capital; and one cannot but join in the wish that this may come to pass some day. With many of Shakespeare's plays this seems impossible, certainly, but no one can say positively that it is so; and, at least in the case of some, the possibility is evident. To take a minor instance, im-

agine the finely-cut buffoonery and inimitable drollery of the three Coquelins in the famous drinking scene from the Twelfth Night; and the beauty and correctness which characterised Mounet-Sully's impersonation of Hamlet, after that actor had made patient study of the part for twenty years, prove how greatly the finish of the French school adds to the refinement of a creation.

The kindly side of Coquelin's versatile nature is shown in his touching devotion to his mother; and he always offers a friendly hand to his comrades in art, though many of his profession are inimical to him. He devotes a certain part of every day, when he is at home, to giving advice to those studying for the stage, receiving without distinction the artist and the novice. His criticism is sharp and quick; his own standard is so high that he requires of each person the utmost of which that person is capable. His keen perception of "how it should be" has made

many an aspirant weep at his "Ce n'est pas ça." This little sentence tells the would-be artist that his desired goal is still very far off. I have frequently heard him at dinner cross swords with Victorien Sardou. Coquelin, who fears nobody, makes bold thrusts, and the play-writer parries exceedingly well, so that the spectators find the combat exciting.

One morning, at the time that Sardou's Thermidor was in rehearsal, Coquelin sent me word that he would drop in for twelve o'clock déjeuner. I hastily called together a few intimate friends to share the pleasure. As we were sipping our coffee in the salon after leaving the table, conversation turned, as a matter of course, upon Sardou's play. We were all quite certain that the drama would be disapproved of by government, and so it proved. Only two representations were given at the Théâtre-Français and it was then withdrawn, as it brought back too vividly the days of the Reign of Terror. The interdiction of the

play did not diminish Coquelin's ardour for it or his interest in the rôle of Bussière, for which he had a particular fancy, and indeed it suited him wonderfully.

On this morning of which I speak he was in the mood for reciting, and, seated quietly in his chair, almost without a gesture, but with all the splendour of his wonderful voice, he gave us a large part of a scene from *Thermidor*, the one in which Bussière looks over the lists of the condemned, seeking for some name to complete the number required, in place of the young girl whose life he has determined to save. It is needless to say that this was to us all the very finest intellectual pleasure that can be imagined.

A few years later this much-feared and exciting drama was given at the Porte-Saint-Martin, greatly to Coquelin's delight. Another act, of which the scene was laid in the National Assembly, had been added by the author. I attended the performance with a young friend, and we were both in-

tensely impressed by it. Nothing could be more thrilling on the stage than this scene where Bussière searches the lists, eagerly and nervously seeking for some one to be made the substitute, and refusing name after name: "O not that one! She must not be executed!"—It is a historical fact that many were saved from death by the humanity and ingenuity of Bussière. The young girl with me was so impressed that she wept bitterly, and, it must be owned, not with the silence of a trained theatregoer! A curious kind of whimpering continued to break out at intervals, for weeks and even months, whenever that tragic scene recurred to her mind, and for all I know she may still be whimpering somewhere in the world. I could not resist the temptation to tell Coquelin about this, and he was vastly amused.

On the morning when he gave us the scene from *Thermidor*, he also gave us a little comic narrative piece, where an Englishman is speaking French with a fine

British accent. This occasioned immense hilarity; but one of my guests, a young Englishman, was evidently displeased; and left the room almost angrily. M. Coquelin was not at all ruffled by this incident. "I am astonished," he said, "for this is the one thing this young gentleman's distinguished father always asks for when I am in London, as does also H. R. H. the Prince of Wales." One really can have no sympathy with this foolish sensitiveness as to accent.

On another occasion, when M. Coquelin chanced to be my guest at dinner, he had just been reading a recent drama entitled Joseph d'Arimathée. Still under the sway of the subtle force and wonderful beauty of the piece, he began talking of it to Jean Béraud, his neighbour at table, speaking also of his delight at having run across such a treasure. Then, all at once, he began quoting passage after passage, with profound feeling and the deepest appreciation of the religious sentiment. Of course





we were all greatly delighted at this unexpected pleasure. Later in the evening an English lady, one of my guests, said to me: "Is it possible that was Coquelin the actor?" Having known him only as the great comedian of the French stage, she was very much surprised at this phase of his character and talent.

The drama was of too sacred a nature for representation, but soon after, on Holy Thursday, I had the pleasure of hearing Coquelin read it at a small theatre in the rue Saint-Lazare, known as la Bodinière, a place where dramatic works that, for various reasons, cannot be performed elsewhere, find a hearing. The same with music. Young composers and young singers, who have not reached the heights of opera, made their first essays here. Sometimes there are two or three day-performances, besides the usual evening one. I mention this as something peculiar to Paris. The price of admission is low, and there is often a very good audience.

Even a brief sketch of Coquelin would be incomplete without mention of his friendship with Gambetta. A tie of the strongest sympathy united these two men, each so eminent in his chosen career; and we cannot doubt that Coquelin indirectly inspired somewhat of the eloquence and the perfect diction which distinguished the oratory of that illustrious deputy, too early lost to France and the world. may indeed venture to say that when Coquelin became an actor, a very great advocate was lost to the Paris bar. At the time of his separation from the Théâtre-Français, a law-suit, as is well known, was imminent. Coquelin declared that he should not engage a lawyer, but would plead his own cause! There can be no doubt which way the case would have been decided. What jury could have withstood his courage, wit and brains! His quizzical look, quick tongue, subtle argumentshow could any judge sit sober beneath his wig before a man who is greeted

with shouts of laughter wherever he appears!

The latest and by far the greatest, the most distinguished, of Coquelin's artistic triumphs he has gained, without doubt, in the title-rôle of Rostand's Comédie Eroïque, Cyrano de Bergerac. Here the actor shows in consummate perfection the two apparently contradictory sides of his remarkable genius: he is the very type of the Gascon soldier, full of braggadocio and fight, merry and impudent; on the other hand he is a lover such as the world has never seen before - one whose power of self-abnegation towards the woman he loves is as great as his love for her — not merely being willing to give her up to another, for whom she has confessed a tendresse, but aiding that other with all the resources of his own brilliant intellect and his passionate and faithful heart, to complete the transient conquest which mere beauty and gallantry of personal appearance have made. And more than this - when Chrétien's death

would seem to have set him free to take what is truly his—for, after all, it is Cyrano, his soul, his letters, that Roxane loves—loyal to his friend, he persists in his "generous imposture" through fourteen years of sublime silence, and only at the moment of his death does Roxane discover that it is really he and not Chrétien whom she has loved. We had supposed that literature and the drama had made us familiar with every variety of lover; but this was a creation hitherto undreamed of.

The author's fame has been immense, and so too has the actor's. How enthusiastically the author appreciated the magnificent impersonation is shown by his dedication of the play:

C'est à l'âme de Cyrano qui je voulais dédier ce poème,

Mais puisqu'elle a passé en vous, Coquelin, c'est à vous que je la dédie.

# MASSENET

#### MASSENET

### CHAPTER IX.

#### MASSENET.

RETURNING from America late in 1895. one of my first acts was to pay my respect to the cher maître, as the artists love to call their favourite Massenet. I found him at at home one winter afternoon, at his desk, the score of Sapho before him, beaming with pleasure over his new theme. charming wife was seated at the fireside with her embroidery, in silent sympathy with her husband's talent, making in all so pretty and interesting a picture that it was vividly photographed on my memory. After this visit to their modest home in the rue du-Général-Foy, I at once decided to make a sketch of this celebrated composer in the hope that Massenet might, at no distant day, be received in America with the

same distinction which his countrymen accord him.

In looking over my musical library, I see a score entitled: Drame Sacrée, Marie Magdeleine. J. Massenet; and I find the accompanying friendly inscription in his familiar handwriting.

The spirit of Massenet's genius as shown in this work touches very deep chords in the human heart. The scene is full of tenderness where our Lord approaches the Magdalene and speaks to her, and the sight of that heavenly face and his gentle words fill her soul with a divine happiness. One feels, with Mrs. Greenough in her wonderful poem "Mary Magdalene":

"The eye that loved the beauty of the flowers, Rested upon that flower-like face, And a divine compassion stirred his heart. What had those god-like eyes descried in her That brought such depth of pity to their gaze?"

Holiness and peace pervade every line and phrase of this lovely oratorio. It flows along, teeming with fine orchestral effects,



#### MASSENET

singing the Christ-like tale of repentance and sorrow in soft voices accompanied by softer violins, interpreting with surpassing beauty the well-known Scriptural story and the gentle words of our Lord.

It chanced one evening that I was reading aloud Mrs. Greenough's poem to a lady whose eyes denied her the pleasure of reading herself. We were both so absorbed that neither of us had noticed the presence of a third person, till suddenly the sound of soft music stole through the room. Some one was at the piano, accompanying the voice of the reader in a manner perfectly in harmony both with the rhythm and the spirit of the poetry. Almost immediately recognised the music of Massenet's oratorio, and it is needless to add that the player was Massenet himself, who had entered the room unannounced, and caught the idea of the words where the Magdalene, seeking the Lord by night, finds herself beneath the windows of the curtained room in which the disciples were gath-

ered around their Master for the Last Supper:

What claim had she to urge importunate
Her unknown presence on that wondrous One,
The Jewish Prophet-King? . . . . . . .
Anguished she turned her faint, reluctant steps
To leave the lonely and deserted spot,
When rising softly in rich-blended tone
Of human pathos and of heaven-born might,
A solemn canticle of prayer and praise
Swelled on the midnight hush. A strain it was
Such as the listening stars have never heard
Again, since that last eve when Jesus' voice
Intoned the hymn his followers upraised.

Deep and more deep the waves sonorous flowed, Full and more full they poured upon her ear: They bore her on their harmony sublime Upward, still upward, till amid the stars Her spirit seemed to float. A peace profound, A lofty calm, a fervent joy, instilled Through all her being; and a strength undreamed, Mighty and forceful, held her soul within Its clasp majestic; while upon her breathed Compassionate, a tenderness divine.

<sup>1</sup> S. Matthew XXVI, 30.

#### **MASSENET**

That strain unearthly set her spirit free:
A sacred love flamed upward in her breast.
All ignorant she stood, yet to her heart
The gates of Heaven opened, ere her mind
Had trod the first steps of the holy way
Of wisdom and of truth. A portent high
Of saving love had snatched her from the life
She knew not how to hate. She gazed above
With unveiled head thrown back. Her bosom
heaved,

Tears slowly welling stole adown her cheeks, And lifting up her arms she suppliant stood, Invoking silently the Unknown God.

As though retiring upward to the sky,
The sounds majestic died upon her ear,
And silence softly sank on all around;
Yet still the harp-strings of her being thrilled
Vibrating with a new, mysterious sense,
Sweet, awful dawning of the spirit life!
Solemn and bright the golden moon shone down,
And from the starry depths a splendour gleamed
Like distant waving of celestial wings,
As to the alien shelter of her home,
Her wondering soul inorbed with heavenly light,
The Magdalene, Christ's miracle, returned."

I finished the poem, and Massenet, rising

from the piano, came forward to join us. Had he understood every word he could not have accompanied the reading more exquisitely. But English is to him an unknown tongue. "How could you know what I was reading?" I said. "How could I fail to know?" he answered. Doubtless he caught the familiar name "Magdalene," and a certain intuition supplied the rest. My first thought was to wish that he could have used Mrs. Greenough's words for his libretto, but the pure and choice English might have lost somewhat of its subtle charm in translation. And here I cannot forbear to express my sincere and profound admiration for this very remarkable poem which, it seems to me, has scarcely had the wide and permanent appreciation it merits.

It was written in Rome in 1880, and bears these words of dedication: "To my husband I affectionately inscribe this poem, suggested by his statue of Mary Magdalene at the tomb."

#### MASSENET

Another score bearing Massenet's name attracts me, Manon Lescaut. How surprising is the musical intelligence which inspired two such interesting works with utterly dissimilar subjects! The devout emotion of the one, the absorbing earthly passion of the other, is each idealised by a skilful and poetic nature which refines whatever it touches. One not acquainted with the romance of Manon Lescaut, by the Abbé Prevost, should read it. Familiarity with the original romance much enhances the enjoyment of the opera.

This story of Manon Lescaut, supposed by Saint-Beuve and many others to be a narrative of the author's own life, was written in the eighteenth century. As a youth, the Abbé Prevost joined the society of Jesuits, but quitted it later to become a soldier. Of this life he soon tired, however, and returned to the brotherhood of Jesuits. In 1721, he became a Benedictine, remaining in the order for seven years. During these years he published some important

literary works, of which the most sympathetic to the public taste is the *Manon Lescaut*. I will give, in brief, an outline of this most extraordinary and curious lovestory.

The Chevalier des Grieux, a Frenchman of rank, destined by his family for the church, meets at Amiens a beautiful young girl of seventeen years. This is Manon Lescaut, who has been sent by her parents from her home in the country to enter a convent. During the conversation which follows their meeting, Manon begs the Chevalier to save her from the convent life which she dreads. The young girl's extreme beauty and innocence appeal so strongly to Des Grieux that he feels at once that here - child though she is - is she who will be the love of his life and the ruler of his destiny, as after events prove: his love for Manon never wavers or changes till death. Several months pass, during which these two youthful and emotional natures lead what seems to them to be an ideal exist-

ence, every thought of church, state, or home-life being completely obliterated from the minds of both.

Suddenly, by his father's command, Des Grieux is seized and carried away to Saint-Denis, and his parents make every effort to persuade him that Manon is false to him and unworthy of his love. The young man is kept a prisoner for six months; during this time he himself strives to overcome his blind passion for his inamorata, and is finally allowed to go to Paris, where he exchanges the Cross of Malta for the ecclesiastic's garb, and the title of Chevalier for that of Abbé. He now devotes himself with zeal to his religious studies; and his essays on theology soon make his name famous. He even lectures at the Sorbonne, and a career of distinction in the church opens before him.

One day, returning from the Sorbonne to the church of Saint Sulpice, he is met, in the sacristy of the church, by his former love who appears before him, a vision of

loveliness and beauty, in all the freshness of her eighteen years. She has come to seek the Abbé that she may induce him to renounce his religious life and return to her and to the world. Inexpressibly shocked at this sacrilegious attempt to allure him from the fulfilment of his vows, Des Grieux at first resists her with stern determination. But in the end he yields, and Manon leads him away in triumph, all his ambition and all his sense of duty being sacrificed to his overmastering affection.

Thenceforward the two lead a vagrant life; in their destitution they are guilty of offences against the law, and suffer arrest, detention, and finally, exile. At last overcome by hardships, Manon dies of exhaustion in her lover's arms; Des Grieux digs her grave with his broken sword, he wraps her in his own cloak, and lays in the ground his beloved, beautiful, and sinning Manon; and then extends himself to die upon the earth that covers her, where later

his body is found. A lack of refinement in some of the details of the original story—due in a measure to the epoch in which it was written—is almost forgotten in the grace and simplicity of the romance, which appeals to every sympathetic heart, and to-day holds its place in French literature as a classic.

It was my good fortune to attend the first representation of Manon at the Opéra Comique in 1884, the title rôle being created by Mme. Heilbrun. I found to my delight that my loge adjoined the one occupied by M. Gounod. I was extremely curious to see how he, as well as the critics, would receive Massenet's setting of this favourite French romance. The joy and enthusiasm of the audience could not have been greater. M. Gounod was more than interested, and from the beginning of the opera to the graceful, stately minuet of the third act, not a note escaped him. As the work progressed, he became radiant; and what a smile he had, and what a beau-

tiful expression when pleased, with his constant "Bravo, bravo, Massenet! C'est idéal, c'est beau!" In the movement where Manon, finding Des Grieux in the church, allures him back to the old life, it was a revelation to see the satisfaction depicted on Gounod's face and his genuine delight in Massenet's triumph. Manon has had immense success in all the capitals of Europe,

"For as long as the heart has passions And as long as life has woes,"

the story of a great, overmastering love such as that of Des Grieux for Manon Lescaut, as rendered by Massenet, cannot lose its charm.

An American singer, Miss Sibyl Sanderson, was the inspiration for *Esclarmonde* (given at the Opéra-Comique, during the last Exposition) in which she sang with great brilliancy and éclat. It was a memorable evening when Massenet read to us the poem he intended to weave into this opera. With what zeal did he enter into



a Mile Fanny Reed on this chine, this furnate of this wipe hour auti 7. Majord pari 1401.

the adventures of Roland, and how eagerly we listened, full of interest and of conjecture as to its probable reception by the public! He was confident of its success, and rightly so. All his anticipations were realised; for, if he possesses one quality stronger than another, it is his comprehension of the theatre, and his ability to grasp situations.

Owing to religious scruples against bringing John the Baptist on the stage, it is doubtful if *Hérodiade*, one of Massenet's strongest works, will ever be heard at the Grand Opéra. It would, however, be erronious to suppose that the *Hérodiade* is in any way unworthy of its dignified theme or shocking to religious sentiment; for the musical setting of this Biblical story is serious enough to satisfy the most exacting mind.

In Goethe's beautiful story of Werther and Charlotte, Massenet has again chosen his theme from a modern classic. This opera has been for years the idol of the

Viennese public, and as sung by their favorite tenor Vandyck (the far-famed Parsifal of Bayreuth) holds the first place in the repertory of their Grand Opera.

Some years earlier than the date of Werther is that of The Cid, with its characteristic ballet of gorgeous colour. Whenever and wherever the bewitching music of this ballet is heard, at the first wave and crash of the orchestra with its distinctive tempo, visions arise of the graceful Andalusian, advancing in the swing of her national dance.

In the spring of 1899 Massenet's Cendrillon appeared at the Opéra-Comique most beautifully staged. The mere word "Cinderella" is magic to every heart that remembers the happy days of childhood,—the one great fairy story of the whole civilised world, read in every tongue, known in every land, and a joy to every human being. For who living has not read, reread, and wept over poor little Cinderella in her chimney-corner, left neglected at home,

while her sisters proudly depart for the ball? We all wept again as Cendrillon in the opera sings her farewell song with her father, when the cruel sisters drive her from the house. Childhood's illusions return to the mind, with the woes and sufferings of the little girl. And, ah! what fairies! The trees blossom with them, and their soft songs are like the sighing of the wind through a forest.

For four years, the score of Massenet's Cendrillon was in the work-room, in process of construction, and over and over again the pages were thrown into the fire, while the composer sought new inspiration. But the result at last has been a composition destined to live, by the side of Manon and Werther.

Socially, Massenet is un vrai charmeur, the very soul of fun and wit. The commonplace incident becomes quaint and amusing from his ready tongue, and his bright eyes fairly dance with pleasure as he seizes the comical side of a would-be

serious matter. M. Massenet is one of the hardest-worked men in Paris, yet he will never refuse a half-hour to the student who wishes his advice, so precious to those struggling for a career. He is most kindly: and, in a manner peculiarly his own, with one wave of the hand, he demonstrates to the uninitiated just how the much-studied measure should be interpreted. Massenet is a great economist of time, and meets his numerous appointments with faultless exactitude. The request for interviews from zealous and admiring musicians is so constant that he is obliged to absent himself from Paris when his own work specially presses. If it be true, as has been sometimes asserted, that Massenet lacks inspiration, his exquisite finish and phrasing never fail to elicit praise even from those who criticise him most. His music is never frivolous; a trifle vague, perhaps; yet always serious and dignified. It is always to be remembered that he has endowed his country with Manon, and let

us thank him for it, and for the poetry with which he has environed his subject.

This master has well earned his laurels. Massenet and Saint-Saëns are the two great representatives of the modern school of French composition, and at the present day lead in France. Both men sit in adoration of the colossus enthroned among the Bavarian hills at Bayreuth.

For years M. Massenet has been a member of the Institute, and upon the death of Ambroise Thomas, the directorship of the Conservatoire was offered to him. The proffered honor was declined, however,—to the delight of M. Massenet's many friends as the position is one requiring vast expenditure of time and labour. The artists, the theatre, and society at large could ill afford to miss his influence. It is safe to say that, like the great Italian master, Verdi, Massenet will never relinquish his pen; but with advancing years will achieve still greater triumphs.

# **PADEREWSKI**

# **PADEREWSKI**

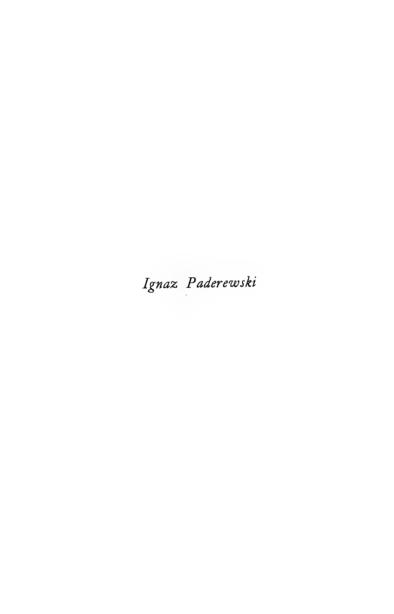
# CHAPTER X.

#### PADEREWSKI.

On a fine October day in the year 1889, all the musical Parisian world was wending its way towards the Cirque d'Été, to attend one of the famous Lamoureux Sunday afternoon concerts. The programme for the day was as usual a fine one. the executants an unfamiliar name attracted attention: Paderewski, evidently a Pole, was announced to play a Concerto by Schumann, with orchestral accompaniment. He soon appeared — a man not quite thirty at this time and looking even younger than he was, of very slight figure, with a face which, once seen, could never be forgotten, — a small, pale, and rarely beautiful face, of great delicacy and intelligence, finely-cut features and rather a sensitive expression.

This remarkable physiognomy was surrounded by a wealth of light blond hair, raised from the brow like a halo, reminding one of Fra Angelico's angel-pictures in the Florentine gallery.

At his appearance murmurs of disapproval arose from the crowd: "Oh, how we shall be bored!"—"He will never please us!"--"How can he interpret Schumann as we require it!" But the first movement of the Concerto was not completed before one became aware that the tide was turning in his favour, and at the finish an enthusiastic murmur of approval ran through the house, for this slender and quiet young man had proved himself a musical giant. In response to an encore he played a tarantelle of his own composition, and his conquest of the musical world of Paris was complete. Shouts of applause greeted him from those who had been most inimical. That day Paderewski established his European reputation. The fiat went forth from this centre of art; and, in music, what





#### PADEREWSKI

Paris decides is accepted by the world. The following year he was heard in London, and shortly after came to America, gaining new triumphs wherever he appeared, and there can be no question that he is everywhere regarded as the greatest living pianist.

Paderewski is one of the few great musicians of the world who is invariably amiable. On one occasion he kindly offered to give a recital at my house, to christen my new piano. That day he played as if inspired, and as if incapable of fatigue. We were all specially delighted with his rendering of one of Chopin's ballades in la bémol.

Every artist has his own manner at the piano. Liszt, as is well known, had a way of throwing back his head defiantly, tossing back his hair like a lion's mane excepting one little stray white lock which would fall over his brow and eyes. Paderewski at the piano has great repose, and, while playing, from time to time, lifts and drops his

eyelids in a dreamy way, showing two wonderfully sad eyes full of a pale blue light, with an expression seemingly oblivious to everything about him, while the magic fingers fly swiftly over the keys in their intricate and complicated movements, interpreting the composer's grand and beautiful ideas, and the artist carries with him with irresistible force and charm the sympathetic listener: "il n'y a pas moyen le résister," as a French lady, herself a musician, well said.

In hearing Paderewski, one is at once impressed with his strong individuality and great charm. Aside from his colossal genius, he is simple and extremely kind-hearted, — traits which endear him to those who meet him in social intercourse. In America he has been greatly beloved and admired, and he fully merits the place he has won for himself in the esteem both of the New World and the Old.

# CHAPTER XI.

#### BAYREUTH.

ONE of the highest aims of mankind is the artistic and æsthetic, and to the earnest amateur a pilgrimage to Bayreuth is an event—one that I, certainly, shall never forget.

Fifteen hundred people from all parts of the world, and all with serious ideas and thoughts, are gathered in this Bayreuth theatre to witness a wonderful display of scenic art and a series of beautiful and realistic pictures, as well as to follow the much discussed, subtle, and complicated harmonies of the greatest of modern composers, Richard Wagner. The semi-sacred musical drama Parsifal is the finest and noblest creation of all the Bayreuth performances. The wonders and mysteries of this beautiful

mediæval legend are revealed by an invisible orchestra which carries the listener along with irresistible, siren-like power. Under the influence of these mighty harmonies one finds one's self walking through the woods with Parsifal, approaching Montsalvat where stands the castle in which is kept the Holy Grail-the sacred cup which, according to legend, first used by our Lord in the institution of the Holy Supper afterwards received a few drops of blood from his side wounded by the soldier's spear. After the Saviour's death, this cup disappeared, being carried away by the angels, but was finally, together with the spear, restored to earth, and given into the keeping of Titurel, a knight of great piety and purity, who established for the defence of these sacred relics an Order, the Knights of the Holy Grail.

The same wonderful orchestral power leads us into the sanctuary where the knights are assembled, and it is now that we hear in its full majesty the *leitmotif* of the Holy

Grail, which sweeps over the soul like a mighty wave of glory. A moment's silence of the instruments, and celestial voices steal through the air, so thrilling and of such exquisite purity that it seems as if the gates of Paradise were opened, and angels and archangels were descending to earth. The intense exaltation of the moment is indescribable; in a way it produces an effect similar to that of the silver trumpets heard under the dome of Saint Peter's in Rome on Easter Day.

Handling instruments like a magician, every conceivable effect and emotion is possible to Wagner. Poet as well as composer, he occupies a most important place in Music, and notwithstanding the hostility and unbelief and sarcasm he has encountered, it must now be acknowledged that he has conquered the world.

A distinguished and rather too critical writer has said: "At the head of the Wagnerian movement in Germany there walks an insane king." Posterity will do justice

to Ludwig II. of Bavaria, who for thirteen years was Wagner's firm friend ever ready with sympathy, enthusiasm and material aid, until the Festival Theatre at Bayreuth was completed and inaugurated in 1876.

The construction of this theatre is a wonder in itself, and might well serve as a model for theatres all over the world. The invisible orchestra is arranged on a succession of broad steps which descend under the stage, whence the music emerges - reflected from a kind of sounding-board above the musicians' heads --- as out of some mysterious space of earth or air, refined, and, so to speak, idealised: the brasses are velvety, the strings are ethereal; there is no sound of catgut or of metal. One should bear in mind, in judging of Wagner's orchestration, which has been criticised as noisy and deafening, that nowhere except in Bayreuth are his works rendered as he intended them to be. No person at Bayreuth could possibly say that the orchestral effects are too violent.

In dealing with the supernatural, Wagner's power is unprecedented. The death of Siegfried has given to the world some of the finest pages of music in all modern art. The splendours of Valhalla; the poetic and sympathetic Brunhilda, doomed to a fatal sleep for an act of tender compassion in disobedience to the will of her father Wotan; the passionate love of Tristan and Isolde; the brave and spotless knights of the Holy Grail, who seem inspired in all that they do with celestial love and a deep consciousness of their vocation; the little shepherd boy in Tannhäuser who falls on his knees praying for his soul when he hears the Chorus of the Pilgrims returning from Rome: heroes, heroines, gods, goddesses, -all are grandly conceived and placed before us like figures in some splendid old picture, living and singing in our presence. All that one sees and hears at Bayreuth is serious, dignified, and intellectual.

Happy, thrice happy, they who are privileged to make the pilgrimage to this

musical Mecca! The critic's sneers are Lilliputian attacks upon a giant, utterly powerless to destroy or in the slightest degree lessen the fame of this one great musical teacher of the Nineteenth Century.

When the first act of Parsifal ended, and in the long wait that followed we all left our seats and went out into the open air, I tried to collect my senses, recalling my promise to a friend to write him my impressions of this musical legend from which no one can come away without reverent sympathy for such a faultless presentation of all that is purest and most elevating. I felt that it would be literally impossible for me to give any intelligent description of what had taken place during this first act - of nearly two hours in length, which had seemed no more than five minutes in passing! We had been sitting motionless and spell-bound, and in complete darkness, except for the light reflected from the illuminated stage; profound silence pervades the auditorium, and

strong religious emotions are aroused, as this drama unrolls itself before us. my own part I seemed to be firmly convinced that I was in another world, or at least in the castle at Montsalvat, while visions passed before my eyes of beautiful youths with long blond curls and a picturesque mediæval costume of light-blue tunic falling to the knee, and long mantle of scarlet-coloured cloth fastened at the throat and hanging from the shoulders. procession to the sanctuary for the celebration of the Mass consists of three choirs children, young men, and lastly, the knights themselves. Among them, the youthful Grail-Bearer advances with a gliding motion, noticeably different from the rhythmic step of the others and yet perfectly in time with the imposing music of the March. Nothing can exceed the expression of adoring love in the face of this youth, as he moves slowly forward, bearing in uplifted arms the loftiest symbol of the Christian faith, his eyes fixed upon the sacred object, and

then, after tenderly and reverently placing it upon the altar, sinks to his knees before it in silent prayer.

After Parsifal has made good his resistance to the Powers of Evil and has secured the holy Spear from the wicked spirit Klingsor, he goes on his way to Montsalvat, where he is to deliver the Spear to the keeper of the Grail. After long wanderings, unawares he enters the sacred domain: here he is met by a hermit who bids him lay aside his armour, and makes known to him that the day is Good Friday. Upon this Parsifal strikes the Spear into the ground, and, laying aside sword and buckler and helmet, kneels before it in silence, while, soft as a snow-flake, the violins of the orchestra intone a prayer of such surpassing beauty, that it is like a draught of fresh water to lips parched with thirst. I was overwhelmed with the effect of these sublime harmonies, and while the soul is vibrating with a new sense of mysterious and spiritual emotions, the air is suddenly

filled with silvery sounds from the dome of the sanctuary, softly descending as on the wings of a dove, with the promise of faith. Wonder again seized me, and I firmly decided I should never be able to convey to my friend any idea of the poetry and grandeur of this great musical drama. Just three words, or rather, one word three times repeated, would be the best I could do at explaining it: "Céleste, céleste, et encore céleste!"

### CHAPTER XII.

#### FINALE.

"ALL good Americans when they die go to Paris," we have been told. Many good Americans go thither while yet alive, and are very content to allow themselves a longer or shorter residence there, "where every prospect pleases," and the facilities for living are vastly greater than can be found in their native land. Nor, in so doing, are they forced to consider themselves as belonging to some "great army of the expatriated," "pitiable wanderers from home and country," as the author of "Social Exiles" would have it. One can love his country still, though absent from it, as the son of an honoured family is by no means unfilial though he may be for years absent from the paternal roof. And I have often

thought that true patriotic feeling is as sincere and ardent in some "American Colony" of a great foreign city as among an equal number of equally cultivated people, taken at random in New York or Philadelphia.

Nowhere more than in the French capital can be found the rest and harmless diversion, sometimes so greatly needed by those for whom American life has been too strenuous. What an enchanting succession of beautiful pictures to the lately arrived New-Englander, fresh from the brick and painted wood of his home, is the first walk in Paris, following the grand line of the Champs-Elysées, from the Arc de Triomphe to the place de la Concorde, thence past the Tuileries, still following the river, past the wicked-looking Conciergerie and the Sainte-Chapelle, to where, on the île de la Cité, the ancient cathedral of Notre-Dame lifts its solid, square towers against the sky. What a wealth of historic associations surround one here, breaking up the wearisome

routine of common life, bringing back the past in all its grandeur, shutting out for the moment the anxieties and cares of the present!

Or, to turn to very trivial things, how pleasing a novelty to the new-comer are the street-cries, unique and often so melodious! There is a pretty little song of the women who have bird-seed to sell: "Grain d'oiseau! Grain d'oiseau!" This is an early morning ditty. At any hour of the day you may hear the tiny child-voice of the gamin in the pathetic cadences of "The little sorrows" (les petits Chagrins), which, three or four years ago, suggested a short pièce de théâtre, a "curtain-raiser" which had a great success - I think at the Gymnase. The cry of the old clo'man has had still greater fame, used by Charpentier in his opera of Louise. There is a street scene on Montmartre, in the early winter morning before day-light. Louise and her mother cross the top of the hill on their way to the atelier. Paris lies below them, still

glittering with lights. There are ragpickers, and vendors of cheap food and drinks; and a tattered, miserable creature shuffles along, chanting in wonderful tones: "Marchand d'habits! Marchand d'habits!" He disappears from sight, and still you hear the musical, pathetic cry. The realism of this greatly struck the popular fancy.

In the shops, a truly wonderful taste draws attention: even the meat-shops are daintily arranged. Strings of sausages will be as gracefully hung, in loops and festoons, as are the strings of Orient pearls in the jewelers' windows of the rue de la Paix. Every detail is carefully studied; at every point good taste presides. And again, how truly French are the great boulevards, where, it has been said, more wit circulates in one hour than in years elsewhere. For our Frenchman is by nature an adept in jeux d'esprit; the very cabby on his box has his share of humour, and feels obliged to make his observations --- much to the amusement of his fare. "'Tis all a comedy," J.-B. Faure



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you may say, as has been often said of French life; but even if this be admitted, a clever and good-humoured comedy is not to be despised.

For decorations on a grand scale, no city in the world equals Paris. At the time the Emperor and Empress of Russia visited the French capital, the avenue des Champs-Elysées was a magnificent sight. avenue, from its vast width and length, lends itself particularly well to decoration. The month being October, its famous double rows of horse-chestnut trees appeared, as if by some magic, in full bloom! So perfect was the illusion, one could hardly believe that all these miles of pyramidal clusters of white flowers, had been made, flower after flower, by skilful hands! the Czar and his lovely Czarina passed along this historic avenue—where, but a few years before, the German army had defiled in triumph—it was like a scene out of dreamland, with the intense popular enthusiasm, the booming of cannon, the

music of military hands—and the chestnut trees flowering in autumn! When the Empress alighted at the Russian embassy that day, those who were near her say that her eyes were filled with tears, so greatly was she touched by the enthusiasm of her reception. There was not one discordant voice in that great popular welcome. France felt that day that Russia was truly her friend.

But, with all their gaieties and their enthusiasms, the French people have their serious side. The working classes are simple, economical, and very industrious. The women work with their husbands and fathers, entering their shops as book-keepers and saleswomen, quick and clever at all they undertake. The artisan is, in his way, an artist; why should he not be, with such treasures of art in galleries and palaces to which he has free access? This taste and intelligence are so highly trained that the humblest of them is competent to tell you the epoch to which belongs any

objet d'art in his own line of work that you may place before him.

The two great schools of art and music. the Beaux-Arts and the Conservatoire, are free to all who can pass the examination. Two foreign pupils are admitted yearly to the vocal class in the Conservatoire. In this school every branch of the art and science of music has its place, including composition and acting, and the standard of excellence is extremely high. This very thoroughness has been a discouragement to many American pupils, who have entered the Conservatoire with rather a superficial training. American girls who sing are apt to arrive in Europe with the idea that after a few months they will be fitted for a leading rôle in Grand Opera; and they are grievously disappointed on finding that they must begin all over again. The classic saying, "Art is long," seems never to have occurred to them, or indeed that there is any "art" at all. If Nature has been fairly beneficent to them in the

matter of a voice, they consider the battle a good deal more than half won. They will dash off a full cavatina with the most slovenly and deplorable pronounciation, or one might almost say, with none at all. Diction is an art scarcely attended to in America. The American girl sings as she often talks—unintelligibly.

One of my young lady compatriots begged me to hear her voice, and calmly unrolled a piece of music which, to my dismay, was nothing less than Casta Diva, the grand aria from Norma. When I protested, and asked for some small romance, she replied that she only sang the great things. It is needless to say that the beautiful aria was rendered with a total absence of tone-production, intelligence, or knowledge of the simplest rules; and yet the young lady had been told, and fully believed, that she was a finished artist. She had no idea of the amount of work to be done before it is possible to please a Parisian public, the consummate finish in

every line and tone; the student will have many a heart-ache and shed many a tear, before she can even get an audition; and often the Director will not allow more than a few phrases, before he stops the singer, telling her truthfully, if perhaps cruelly, that she "will not please."

At the same time it is perfectly true—and now generally admitted—that American voices are the finest in the world. Mme. Nordica, Mme. Eames, Mme. Sanderson, are all distinguished artists, and by talent and study have placed themselves in the front rank of *prime donne*.

A very celebrated amateur, who had been singing for years and had a great reputation as a singer, was told by Mme. Marchesi at an audition, "You sing very well, but I cannot understand a word you say." A teacher of diction was eagerly sought, and now, the poem is pronounced so distinctly that not one word of it fails to be understood.

It would have been a good lesson for all

young aspirants for fame who are faulty in the matter of diction to attend a concert given lately at the Trocadéro, for the benefit of the Artist Fund, to which M. Faure offered his services. I fear we heard him for the last time, as he is now seventy-two years of age. A few details of this great singer's career will, I am sure, be interesting. M. Faure began his career as a choir-boy, making his début as a barytone, in 1852, at the Opéra-Comique. In 1859 Meyerbeer wrote for him the rôle of Hoël in the Pardon de Ploërmel. His success was so brilliant that two years later he was received at the Grand Opéra. He was again selected by Meyerbeer for an important rôle, that of Nelushko in l'Africaine, and this gave the final stamp to his reputa-For the next ten years no one of the great works produced at the Grand Opéra was regarded as complete without him. He sang in London and in Baden, but he is one of the few famous French singers who could never be tempted to cross the Atlantic.

In 1876, he left the operatic stage, and since then has sung but very rarely in public. M. Faure is still the greatest barytone singer we have, and, even now, his voice is as fresh as that of a youth of twenty, showing no sign of fatigue, so perfect is his method. Four thousand people were gathered in the great hall of the Trocadéro, to hear once more, after long silence, this transcendant artist who had been for years the idol of Parisian audiences. The interest was very great to know how M. Faure would sing, and how much voice he had left. The perfect style and faultless diction, as shown in the first touching and tender words of his own composition le Crucifix: "Ceux qui souffrent," with full organ accompaniment, dropped on the audience like a great sob, and men and women alike wept. The pretty duet from Mireille followed — a performance requiring great delicacy and finish. To the surprised delight of all who knew the difficulties of such vocalisation, it was most

daintily rendered. But the mastery with which he gave the Noël was sublime:

"Peuple à genoux! Voici le Redempteur!"

At these inspired words and the roll of the grand organ, we felt ready to prostrate ourselves in obedience, with as much fervour as ever did pilgrims at a Papal Benediction. It was a moment in my life which I shall hardly forget. Such marvellous execution demonstrates that the vocal powers can be retained to a great age, if the art of singing has been correctly studied and understood; and without doubt Paris is the one city in the world where the very highest facilities for training the voice are most easily obtained.

